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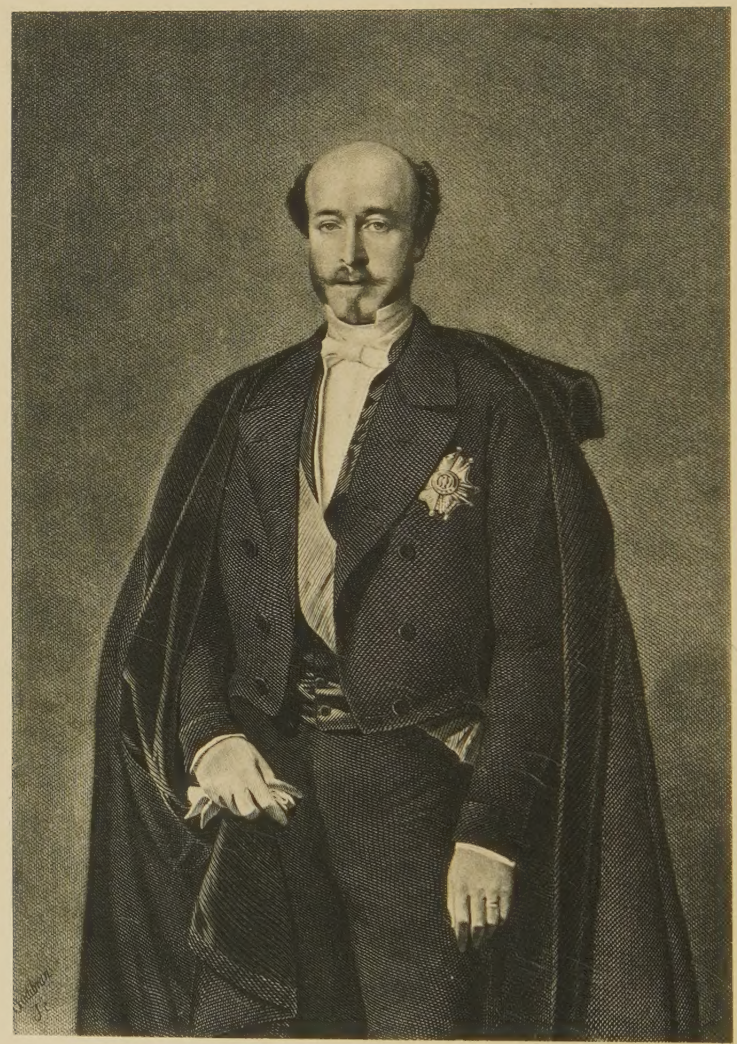

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Le Duc de Morny.

LE DUC DE MORNY

THE BROTHER OF AN EMPEROR AND THE MAKER OF AN EMPIRE

BY

FRÉDÉRIC LOLIÉE

AUTHOR OF

"GILDED BEAUTIES OF THE SECOND EMPIRE," "THE LIFE OF AN EMPRESS EUGÉNIE DE MONTIJO," "PRINCE TALLEYRAND AND HIS TIMES," ETC.

ADAPTED BY BRYAN O'DONNELL, M.A.

WITH PHOTOGRAVURE PORTRAIT AND TWENTY-TWO OTHER PORTRAITS

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THERE are certain subjects the perusal and study of which tend to stimulate the interest of the student, and encourage him to investigate them further in hopes of throwing more light upon them, and of unearthing fresh sources of knowledge.

Before taking leave of the society of the Second Empire, we thought we might still spend many happy moments in its company. We have endeavoured to sketch the physiognomy of the man who summed up in the most characteristic fashion the features and tendencies of his period. He was a man of action and a man of leisure, audacious in his undertakings, and heedless in his dilettantism. He was devoured by ambition and frivolous withal. He occupied a conspicuous position, thanks to the name he bore, but very little was known of the details of his life.

Auguste de Morny, the chief coadjutor of Napoleon III. in the *coup d'état* of December and the leading spirit of his reign, was without doubt the most telling personality at the Imperial Court, with the exception of the Emperor himself.

We deem it due to history to present in its

proper frame this personality, the complexity of whose origin lends such strange interest to it. That interest is increased by the circumstances that brought it to light, and by the suddenness of its disappearance at a moment when the difficulties which had arisen in external and internal affairs rendered its presence more necessary than ever. The data at our disposal were not as abundant as one might have supposed. Many commentaries and imaginary stories were woven around Morny's cradle. His bold speculations have often been referred to. It has constantly been stated that he exemplified to the full those men known as lucky politicians. It is a matter of history that he was the active agent of the *coup de force* of 1851, a reprehensible act in principle, but which afforded many years of stable and prosperous government to France, which then, as now, sincerely yearned for peace.

Accurate information was lacking upon all other matters connected with his career. Morny had intended to write his Memoirs, but he only left some hurriedly written trails of his daring and brilliant course through the social and political worlds. Such documentary evidence as passed into the hands of his heirs at law consisted of some diplomatic correspondence, a small bundle of private letters, and a few sparse notes upon financial or economic questions. The documentary harvest was increased by such gleanings as a few contemporary appreciations, by some

anecdotes and quotations too often repeated to be of any use to us. A few impressions from the pens of Countess Dash and Vicomte d'Alton-Shée, two or three chapters by Veron and Villemessant, and some excellent pages contributed by Émile Olivier, completed the *dossier* upon Morny. Previous to the investigations pursued by Baron de Maricourt and by ourselves little light had been thrown upon the very intricate imbroglio of a pedigree thrice irregular. The childhood of Auguste de Morny and the first awakenings of his active and passionate youth were little known. The intimate details and the external manifestations of his maturer days were vaguely referred to. His last days and his end were shrouded in a legendary veil.

We have been able to fill up the gaps and connect the links of this interesting story, thanks to contributions obtained by us from private and official sources. A number of fresh facts hitherto unknown or misinterpreted are now placed in their true light. They refer not only to this striking personality, but to the surroundings in which it had its being. Thanks to the kindness of Baron de Behr, a cousin of the Duchesse de Morny and a leading spirit in the Court circles of the Second Empire, we are able to reproduce his impressions upon a section of the foreign aristocracy which resided in Paris at that time. The Baron has favoured us with many interesting details concerning the Russian and Polish colonies

which were much to the fore in 1859. Some considered that this social set was loud, ill-mannered, and somewhat heedless in matters of good form and propriety; but it was much appreciated because of its independent spirit, its real charm, and on account of the grace and beauty of its womanhood.

We have spared no pains in dealing with serious questions in a fit and proper tone, but we have not thought fit to exclude from our narrative anecdotes in a lighter vein which may afford some welcome relaxation to the student of history. A few wreaths of flowers and a few lace trimmings do not deface the garb of the austere Muse called History.

This work does not purport to be a eulogy or a political satire upon De Morny, whose reputation it will neither enhance nor diminish. All we hope is that we may depict the man with that political and moral accuracy which hitherto has been wanting.

We think it useful to indicate the principal features of our work before attacking it in all its details.

Morny was one of those privileged mortals of whom it has been said that success was their twin-brother. He was not a victim to that vanity born of power or of success because he considered it quite natural that both should accrue to him. The fact that he had always lived in a polished, refined circle imparted to him that superficial

charm which words cannot define. It is an impression created by certain men, and fades away with them. It is a charm which holds men spellbound at first sight.

He studied simplicity and sought it, though he was not simple by nature. His natural or assumed affability was not enhanced by the cordial smile of the Emperor, his brother. He was proud, but betrayed no arrogance. His wit, his conversational powers, and his exquisite manners enabled him to retain the sympathy of men as long as he chose. All were agreed that the only way to resist his charms was not to come into contact with them.

He had learnt much more by the knowledge of men and the practice of things than by hard work. He read little and knew little, but his quick intuition and his promptness in conceiving and carrying out a resolution enabled him to hide his ignorance. One praiseworthy quality among all lent great weight to his judgment. That was his just appreciation of the merits of his friends and adversaries alike. His will was all of a piece, but his polite and conciliatory manners afforded it the necessary articulations. He possessed that elegance of form and manners which attracts and seduces, and an energetic character which commands and imposes itself upon men.

His tastes were anything but contemplative, for his interest was wholly centred in persons and in passions, or in the active phases of life. In the

matter of religion he remained what he was by education and by birth—a child of the eighteenth century, whose conscience was little troubled by the belief in a personal God, Witness of his acts, and the Supreme Judge of them. If he did believe in such a God, the fact in no way hampered him in the expression of his feelings or in the satisfaction of his impulses. No moralist was ever more indulgent upon the chapter of morality. He readily forgave in others the weaknesses which entered to a great extent into his own composition. Pure considerations of justice, of right and wrong, held but little sway in his mind, though he had his own conception of honour—that is, honour as conceived by the world, and interpreted in accordance with his own self-pride, governed by his own judgment. In matters of politics or finance he was never the victim of scruples. On more than one occasion he took an active part in the formation of certain companies which were hardly worthy of the attention of a statesman. He did so, not so much for the sake of money as for the sake of power, which, of course, is the immediate resultant of money. He has often been blamed, both in his lifetime and since his death, for some of those shady transactions; but he adopted the formula of Tacitus, who said that money, much more than ordinary war, is the real sinew of civil and political strifes. He would have played a much more important part in the affairs of his country had it not been known that politics handled by him

became a financial lever, not the instrument of a legitimate business. He never held definite opinions. By character and by instinct he was an aristocrat, just as he was an Imperialist by the sheer force of circumstances and for his own ends. Unlike the Emperor, his brother, he was never obdurate. Sound advice was always welcomed by him, and the events of each day afforded him useful lessons, which governed his line of conduct. He knew the value of cool calculation, which enables one to bow and submit when necessary. He had no absolute views, save upon the question of law and order, which must be respected at any cost.

His conduct was never guided by superior principles or by lofty ideas ; he merely trusted to success. Together with ample means, it represented to him the highest form of divinity. In difficult circumstances he did not stop to study or to query the means used by him, because all means were legitimate if they could be useful. He was so busy in filling up his time in life that he had no time left to indulge in spiritual or sentimental flights of fancy.

Morny was a brilliant man of real merit, but with grave shortcomings. In the history of his period he will long remain one of its most seductive members, and more than one portraitist will indulge in character sketches of this interesting personality long after we have accomplished our task. We have given full-face and profile sketches

of him, because the subject vividly appealed to us. For the same reason we have depicted Imperialist society, which has been reproached with many faults, but kindles a feeling of regret in our Republican souls when we witness the ferocious class hatred, the spirit of universal revolt, and the ceaseless strife born of greed and rivalry, which are the sores of present times and grave sources of fear for the near future.

FRÉDÉRIC LOLIÉE.

ADAPTER'S PREFACE

This is the third contribution to the annals of the Second Empire presented to the British public by Frédéric Loliée and myself. I have to thank both the British Press and the public for the kind way in which the English versions of our work have been appreciated. I know that it is wellnigh impossible to do justice to the original work of a brilliant writer by transplanting it into fresh soil and dressing it in a foreign tongue.

Shakespeare must be read in English, and Goethe's "Faust" must lose considerably at the hands of any translator, just as the Gallic cock of Rostand can only crow upon French soil. The idiomatic difficulties which beset the translator or adapter are not so great, however, as those due to the ethical and temperamental differences between the characters of two countries so dissimilar as France and England. Like charity, *l'esprit gaulois* covers a multitude of sins. The epigram, the *mot pour rire*, and the witticisms flow from a Frenchman's pen. His wit has brilliant flashes that singe the wings of prudery and call forth a blush upon the virtuous cheek of propriety. Who-

ever essays the task of presenting in British garb the effusions of a French writer has often bitten off more than he can chew. In these days of austere censorship, when the freedom of thought and expression is still hampered by an inquisition as insular as it is severe, sparkling gems of wit and true literary merit cannot be displayed to the best advantage with the sombre background of the English language. What is light and graceful when expressed in French must often become heavy and amorphous ribaldry in English. Although propriety is not the exclusive monopoly of the Anglo-Saxon race, it is one of its most cherished possessions. We have endeavoured to remember this fact and to respect it. With this object we have been compelled to leave some jewels in their caskets, because their dazzling rays might have caused a *sauve qui peut* in the ranks of Madame Anastasia Grundy's followers. Like Morny, our hero, we uphold law and order, and we respect convention. We would not betray it. The conventions of society are the corner-stones upon which rests its frail construction. Remove them and you cause a catastrophe. It is unwise to throw down that which you cannot replace, frail though it may be. The social fabric of a country is a necessary evil which must obtain for ever!

The spread of education will do much to harmonize the thoughts and judgments of nations. In due time their appreciation of good and evil will become truly catholic. Then, and only then,

can the humble adapter in this country offer his readers a literary fare seasoned with Gallic salt and French mustard, without incurring the risk of anathema. Until then his *plat du jour* must be cooked in accordance with the culinary rules laid down by British convention, propriety, and public opinion.

BRYAN O'DONNELL.

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LE DUC DE MORNY

CHAPTER I

AUGUSTE DE MORNY AND THE SOCIETY OF THE SECOND EMPIRE

The survivors of the old Court—A sketch of a society woman who was betimes a woman of letters—History and romance—Around a cradle—A somewhat confused pedigree—Louis XV. and Adèle Filleul; Talleyrand and Madame de Flahaut-Souza; General Charles de Flahaut and Queen Hortense; and, as a culmination, Morny—The true and intimate accounts of all his adventures.

At the genesis of our story, towards the year 1813, the drawing-room of a quiet Paris residence in La Rue Verte was the headquarters of a group of persons whose main pleasure was bright and intellectual conversation. La Rue Verte was almost a provincial street, noiseless, deserted, discreet, and really worthy of the graceful name that it bore, but has not since preserved;* for each of its houses stood in a garden, a bower of lilac and roses that exhaled the fragrant perfume of fresh flowers. The hostess, the heroine of Madame de Staël's "Corinne," under the name of Madame d'Arbignes, was wont to gather round

* La Grande Rue Verte, or Great Green Street, started from No. 6, Rue Saint-Honoré.

her visitors who had mostly ceased to be young, and whose manners stamped them as members of yesterday's society. You could have recognized them by their tone and refined speech before hearing their names. They were not, in truth, the illustrious lords, the people of high birth, who represented the Court and the Academy under the Presidency and under the same charming hostess. Cardinal de Rohan, Prince and Princess de Beauvau, Counts Luxembourg and Narbonne, the Duc de Lauzun, the Marquis Aimé Pierre de Montesquiou-Fezensac, Louis-Philippe de Ségur, and the Marquis de Chastellux, were former guests who never returned. The names and titles of the present ones were somewhat more modest: Le Roy, Gallois, and Dominique Bertrand, constituted the indispensable trio among the regular visitors on a certain day of the week.* These refined epicurean wits were the friends of the famous Counts of Albany, of Suard, the Academician, and also of Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun before the days of the Revolution. Having much to relate in common, and many mutual regrets, they naturally foregathered at the Green Street residence. They constituted an interesting and faithful circle of friends,† which should have been

* It was Thursday. Madame de Rémusat and Madame de Rumfort, La Bédoyère, and Charles de Sismondi, the newcomer, were regular guests.

† One of them, however, broke away after the second restoration for mean political motives. It was Bertrand, brother of Bertrand de Molleville, Minister to Louis XVIII., who, in the company of Talleyrand-Périgord, had breathed

enhanced by the presence of a former visitor—famous, powerful, richly endowed with intellectual gifts, but rather poor as far as those of the soul were concerned. There were, indeed, good reasons why he should have occupied his former seat in this intimate gathering. Did he not consider that the memory of the heart was the greatest of all chimeras? Talleyrand had long since forgotten an affection which in former years had sunk deep into his soul, but which had committed the grave mistake of growing old.

One would also have expected to see another visitor there, a well-known and interesting foreigner, an American citizen—Governor Morris, who during the whole Revolution had been a careful student of the incredible upheavals which shook France to her very foundations. He was a caustic, keen observer, whose clear impressions, recorded on the spur of the moment, had grown

---

an atmosphere of egotism and complete oblivion of old friends. His defection was keenly resented. The lady who had been his friend wrote thus: "His desertion and his ingratitude have stabbed me and pierced my soul. Bertrand—our beloved Bertrand—ran away and left us as soon as the Russians were at the gates of Paris. Yet, as you know, he had always enjoyed the utmost freedom in our circle. The noble characters and the proud and courageous men who have stood by me would never forgive my weakness if they found him once more in my room, but, between you and me, I would gladly welcome his return. Love is made up of indulgence. I know full well that the time at which he forsook me was truly a chosen one, but he had grown to be a habit of twenty-eight years' duration, and such habits leave deep roots in a woman's heart" (fragment of a letter dated 1814).

more important with time. His foresight was often prophetic, and though some of his political prognostics may have been faulty, his judgment on the whole was wonderfully accurate. Unfortunately, it was some years since he had left his French friends to settle down in Morrisania,* his home. He, too, had boasted of being a *persona gratissima* with the lady of the house during the bygone days of the radiant season when she set fire to fashionable society in her apartments at the Louvre, before seeking a quiet shelter where she could live in peace and subsist upon the residue of her fortune.

We have now reached the Rue Verte, where we find a white-haired lady seated on a settee, smiling, anxious not to lose a single anecdote or witty word of the conversation. She has preserved all the vivacity of expression that she possessed in youth, and her smile is both arch and tender, while at times her whole face seems bathed in tender recollection. She inspires and leads the conversation, and when she relates some incident the language she uses betrays the fact that she belongs to the most refined period of the eighteenth century—the so-called pure eighteenth century.

* This Governor Morris was a very witty man. Unfortunately, he suffered from inordinate vanity, which, though somewhat checked by education, led him to overrate his influence upon young and beautiful women, notwithstanding the fact that he suffered from a grave imperfection—to wit, a cork leg. Such attributes can hardly be said to enhance the chances of success.

MAURICE DE TALLEYRAND-PÉRIGORD

Those who know her charming writings can readily conceive that she was enamoured of everything connected with this period—its tone, its customs, its education.

Her name was Madame de Souza, but she was previously the seductive Comtesse Adélaïde de Flahaut. So mysterious was her destiny, so strange the complications of her existence, that she, the putative daughter of Louis XV., became one of the lady friends of De Talleyrand, and, through his friendship, which was in reality true love, she became the mother of General de Flahaut and the grandmother of Auguste de Morny, the subject of this book, a hero of history and of adventure.

How had these extraordinary results come about? We shall endeavour to sketch them faithfully upon the canvas.

She came of an inglorious and commonplace family in Normandy, and was the daughter of Adèle Filleul, demoiselle de Longpré, who had arrested the passing attention of the King. She had come from Falaise to Paris, and being clever and a coquette, she made friends with the financial aristocracy of the Rue du Mail. She was perhaps the offspring due to the wandering caprice of Louis XV.,* related to the Marigny

* Her sister Julie always claimed the honour of this illustrious parentage, and gloried in the fact of being the daughter of the King ("Memoirs of Chaverny").

family,* inasmuch as the brother of Jeanne Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour (the dear fellow, as his sister called him), had married Julie Filleul—the handsome and seductive Julie,† the friend and cousin of Comtesse de Séran. This Poisson had been created Lord of Vandières and later Marquis de Marigny and de Ménars, and had held the position of Director-General of His Majesty's buildings.

* This relationship was certainly not the highest ascendancy in this confused network of family ties. It is well known that the Poissons sprang from a shady and untrustworthy set of commoners. The father of Jeanne Poisson, Marquise de Pompadour, the King's privileged friend, was a clerk in the Supply and Transport Department, and had deserved the rope through some scandalous transactions in matters concerning stores. Her mother's conduct was wellnigh scandalous, but Pompadour had washed all this away and obliterated the deep-stained past of her family, thanks to the caprice of her all-powerful lover.

† Marmontel, writing about Julie Filleul, said that she was idolized by all, on account of her wit, her charm, her beauty, and her sense. Madame de Pompadour, however, was not at all pleased with this marriage, as she had hoped that her brother would effect some illustrious alliance, the glory of which would benefit her. She had offered him a daughter of Field-Marshal de Lowendal, whom he forsook for somebody else. She then tried to marry him to the daughter of the Duc de La Vallière, who repelled him instead of attracting him, and whose parents, he said, were inflated with insufferable pride. He could also have married the daughter of Princess de Chimay, but he would not hear of her, though she had undertaken to have him made a Duke, and later on an hereditary Duke, if he would only become her husband. Each time he had asserted that he cared more for his independence, and that when he did consent to forego it, he would only do so for the sake of a woman he really loved. After hesitating for years, he rounded the Cape of Matrimony, and ran ashore in a commonplace family, the daughter of which became his wife. The proud D'Étioles was infuriated by his action.

Such were the ties, direct or indirect, which connected her with the whole Court before she became one of its ornaments. Her claim to join its inner circle was a valid one, indeed, if these facts as to her birth were true.

She was educated at a convent, but at one of those free-and-easy convents such as existed in those days, when she and her young companions could indulge in the gossip of flighty innocence, unhampered by the supervision of morose Superiors. As had been the case with one of her heroines, Madame de Nançay, she had been married, for purely conventional reasons, as soon as she left school. She was informed that the husband chosen as the protector of her juvenile attractions was Count de Flahaut, aged fifty-seven. The distinguished manners, noble character, and the general demeanour of Monsieur de Flahaut, Colonel in the King's army before becoming the Superintendent-General of the King's gardens,* lent much merit to him in the eyes of his spouse, but did not atone for the loss of youth, which had long since forsaken him.

Imbued as she was with the indulgent doctrines of a century of easy morals, during which the pursuit of love was the chief occupation of beautiful and idle women, the very law which governed their existence, she could barely be expected not to yearn for its coveted compensations.

* He held the position from the death of Buffon, the great naturalist, until 1792.

At the time when her youth launched her into a turmoil of passions the Comtesse de Flahaut had a very charming figure. She was not tall, nor was she a perfect beauty, but her face possessed a charm both powerful and enduring. Her eyes were bright, her nature lovable, and her conversation sparkling with wit and intelligence. So great was her greed for an intimate knowledge of the most intimate trepidations of the human heart that she was naturally led into situations which gave rise to some gossip; but she continued the pursuit of her perilous studies.

While the Comtesse de Flahaut was culling flowers on the road of life, she laid in a good store of indulgence for herself and for others. Her whole external existence was eminently proper, even in those intimate details which are most foreign to propriety. Her writings were couched in a moral tone, as pure as the limpid spring of an oasis. With a deft and light hand she would throw a virginal veil of idealism over the fevered passions of her soul and senses. Notwithstanding all this, she was pursued by a host of admirers at this period, and she cast more than one encouraging glance at some of them.

One of those glances fixed a young Abbé at Court with singular complacency. He was pleasant to contemplate, dangerous to listen to, quick to return ten glances for one, not overburdened with scruples or hard-and-fast principles, a sceptic in matters moral and religious, intent

upon making the best use of such advantages as he might acquire with women first and then with men. Such was the Abbé Maurice de Périgord, future Bishop of Autun, and later on a fugitive from ecclesiastical pomps, doomed beforehand to be excommunicated by the Pope, but compelled to console himself by becoming a Minister, an Ambassador, and a Prince. Talleyrand was his name. Before he led Europe and deceived Kings and Governments in a masterly way, he tied and untied the knots of amorous diplomacy.

This Talleyrand, who had nothing sacerdotal save his title and the taste for the benefits which flowed softly from the bosom of Mother Church, had begun his career by scoring successes in which religion and God Himself had lost all their rights from the start. He was but a simple Abbé of twenty years of age when he confessed this unblushingly one night in the course of a very free conversation at the house of the Comtesse Du Barry. It was a house in which strict morals held sway. Some young lords were boasting there of their merits and their victories. Monsieur de Périgord took no part in the conversation, but remained silent, with his head bowed down.

"Why do you remain so sad and quiet?" inquired La Du Barry.

"Alas, Comtesse! I was obsessed by the sad reflection that it is much easier to obtain these things in Paris than fat livings."

The young Levite obtained what he wanted,

something better than a living—a diocese. This did not prevent him from devoting much time to profane pursuits. He was the freest of all Abbés, the most unbelieving of all Bishops.* He was merely biding his time until he could tear the contract which bound him to the Church. He was, moreover, a great nobleman, a red-heeled nobleman, who bridled his ambition and bore his soul in patience while swelling the lists of his gallant exploits. Lame as he was, he careered briskly through the world.

He met with miraculous success, thanks to his refined and handsome face, his semi-contemptuous smile and languorous manner, his clever and deceitful methods, much the same as those used, no doubt, by Cardinal de Retz with the ladies who had joined "The Fronde." Everyone knew that Achilles, son of Thetis, had a vulnerable spot, and that capricious Nature had given him a club-foot. He was able, however, to disguise his infirmity by wearing high-heeled shoes, cleverly padded and adorned by large diamond buckles. Besides, it was only natural that the women he hypnotized with his magic eye—a blue, deceitful, caressing, and penetrating eye—should forget such a detail as an ill-shaped foot.

He did not yet cultivate weighty speech, and it was difficult to imagine then that one day he would impose his great thoughts upon the Chan-

* As Bishop of Autun, he was about to officiate one day at the Champ de Mars before an immense and devotional crowd, when he whispered to General La Fayette, "Don't make me laugh."

ceries of Europe. At times he commingled politics and love in the course of light conversation, and he had predicted in a *tête-à-tête* with Madame de Flahaut that they would both sap and reconstruct the Government of France. He awaited patiently the opportunity for revealing himself as the French Metternich. He was satisfied for the nonce in the pursuit of pleasures, seeking new recipes of joy, and creating relations which would be useful to him later on, regardless of party considerations. Having everything to gain in society and through society, he was amiable, eager, and gave full rein to his sparkling wit, pending the day when he would reap the interest of his investments, under different circumstances.

He met the Comtesse de Flahaut towards 1780, in the aristocratic circles to which they both belonged. He was won over at first sight, and described the distemper of his heart in the vivid terms which he used as a past-master. He was encouraged to prove his love by coming as often as possible to the receptions of Madame de Flahaut in her apartments at the Louvre. He pressed his suit so eagerly that he invited himself to dine every night in this hospitable house, without consulting Monsieur de Flahaut. He would, no doubt, have taken up his abode there if the goodwill of the husband and the indulgence of the world had allowed him to do so. If Talleyrand partook of all Madame de Flahaut's dinners, whether invited or not, the Comtesse de Flahaut

attended all the receptions, both ordinary and extraordinary, of Monsieur de Talleyrand. He entertained lavishly in his mansion in the Rue Saint-Florentin. On the 23rd Vendémiaire* he invited the whole of Paris society to a magnificent gala reception, which was much commented upon. Rumour had it that the loveliest women in the capital had tried everything possible and impossible to obtain invitations, and gossipers related the case of a charming bourgeoise who was so anxious to gain access to an aristocratic set to which she did not belong by birth, that, in exchange for an invitation, she had rewarded very handsomely one of Talleyrand's secretaries. On such occasions Madame de Flahaut shone brilliantly among the stars, and the next day Talleyrand, who spoke much better than he wrote, would hurry to her, his lips blossoming with compliments, to congratulate her upon her marvellous success of the previous day. Such friendships cannot exist unheeded by society, and in this case society was true to its habits, for it made more caustic comments than pleasant remarks upon the situation. Some were amused and made fun of the lady and her lame ecclesiastic; others, like Count d'Angiviller, Madame de Flahaut's brother-in-law, were greatly shocked and annoyed. This rough censor could not be bitter enough against the faithless spouse and her

* Vendémiaire was the first month of the calendar of the first French Republic, from September 22 to October 21.

COUNTESS DE FLAHAUT-SOUZA
A. Doumenq

mitred monster. Whether true or treacherous, these comments ran their full course.*

When Auguste Charles Joseph de Flahaut de la Billarderie was born in Paris, on April 25, 1785, it was generally remarked that this first child had come rather late. People added that during the many years of calm marital life spent by a couple, one of whom was sixty and the other a woman in the full expansion of her youth and charms, no children had come to them. No one doubted that they were full of sympathy towards each other, or that they enjoyed each other's society in repose and pleasant conversation by the fireside, but that any elements of greater activity could burn within their souls or feed upon their mutual love was denied by one and all. Keen observers compared dates, and found that the suit of Maurice de Périgord waxed stronger as the health of Count de Flahaut grew weaker—so much so that Talleyrand was held personally responsible for an event the results of which were neither unfortunate nor disastrous.

On the contrary, for influence full of powerful possibilities shone round the cradle of a child born of a broken line, with a bar sinister upon its coat of arms. The whole of its life was to be spent under that same happy influence.†

* In his letters to the Comtesse de Neuilly the savage d'Angiviller refers constantly to the conduct of the Bishop of Autun, and to the frivolous behaviour of his sister-in-law.

† No member of the Morny family ever denied the existence of this bar. I once asked a son of the Duc de Morny

The first appearance of Charles de Flahaut in this world was much commented upon. A daily witness of these social intrigues, a confidant of Madame de Flahaut, a rival more than a friend of Talleyrand, who seemed to regret that he had not taken a more active part in the matter, Governor Morris, went to the trouble to sift it in its entirety. So absolute are his assertions, and apparently so justified, that they impart almost historical conviction. We will only quote one of his remarks; it will speak for all the others, for it is perfectly precise and goes into minute details: "I have just been to the Louvre. The Bishop was with Madame de Flahaut, and he asked to be allowed to dine with her son, who arrived to-day. It was quite a family dinner. When he had left I apologized to Madame de Flahaut for having interrupted such a beautiful scene. She told me a great deal about her child and cried bitterly."

Young Charles was taken down again to see Talleyrand, just as young Auguste de Morny was some years later. But if the paternal sentiment ever existed in the breast of the old statesman, it decreased sensibly as years rolled on, and was eventually replaced by almost hostile feelings. We could quote from the journal of the Duchesse

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what he thought of the allegation, and whether it did not, in his opinion, seem a false one. He answered that, when all the circumstances were taken into account, such as the physical likeness between Prince de Bénévent and the brother of Napoleon III., together with the intellectual and moral likeness between the two men, the Talleyrand paternity seemed almost conclusively proved.

de Dino bitter remarks, vicious sallies, and direct epigrams at the expense of Flahaut the man and of Lady Keith, his wife. We know that the witty niece of the great Talleyrand wrote under his very eyes and was in touch with his heart. But had he a heart ?—had he a heart ? Just now we came upon Madame de Flahaut bathed in tears. She wept over the financial losses she had incurred, over the mental agony caused by Talleyrand's infidelities, and for many other reasons which affected her sensitive nature. Her tender imagination had led her to stake her all upon an ungrateful man who never took the trouble to love or to hate, and who had only one principle, one scruple, one fear in life—the fear that he might be bored or inconvenienced. Fortunately, she had some compensations, pleasant and varied diversions. They comforted her in her misfortune—a misfortune that wounded her, but did not crush her.*

Madame de Flahaut was a great lady, and she did not complicate her life by following severe principles. Provided appearances were safeguarded, and that in conversation her guests adhered to those conventions which woman ever respects, she did not seek to enforce more stringent

* The period of tears and regrets had long since passed when she wrote to the Countess of Albany without mentioning the name of the absent one, whom she now called the "ancient one," lost and almost forgotten. "As to the ancient one, I have not heard of him ; but my wound has been so long healed that his silence neither surprises nor annoys me. He will either return or continue to forget me without causing me pain or pleasure" (September, 1814).

rules, being fully aware of the proclivities of human weaknesses.

Her life was not completely absorbed by the pursuit of pleasure and the joy of living, for it contained much sadness and anxiety. On the horizon the clouds were gathering fast. The passions which were to hurl France into the abyss of revolution were rising ominously. The storm burst, creating a strange undoing of this frivolous and charming society. After the storm grave cares beset the Comtesse de Flahaut—the tragic death of her husband under the knife of the "Terreur," emigration and its sufferings, a trying residence in a foreign land, work courageously done in order to live, the compensations afforded her by the growth of her literary reputation, and then her return to Parisian life. She was fêted and warmly welcomed from the very moment she set foot in the drawing-room of Madame Tallien. Then came her second marriage, in 1792, to José-Maria de Souza-Botelho,* late Ambassador of

* In the "Memoirs" of Talleyrand we find the following ironical allusion to this marriage and to matters of bygone times:

"Before returning to France, I was anxious to know what was going on there. Madame de Flahaut, who was in Hambourg, seemed little inclined to satisfy my desire, for when I was on board the *Elba* she sent me a message, which Monsieur de Riccé was simple enough to convey to me, to the effect that she strongly advised me not to land, but to return to America. She invoked as a reason for this her former attachment to me, which she said was known to everybody, and she feared that her marriage to Monsieur de Souza might be prevented by my coming ashore. I considered that it was not indelicate of me

Portugal, and the last thrillings of her heart before she resigned herself to retire in the definite peace of recollection.

The fevers of yore had now disappeared, and with them the ardour of youthful dissipation. She lived her life over again, thanks to her wonderful imagination ; but in reality she devoted it to the education of a little child, of whom we shall speak later, and to quiet intercourse with old and trusted friends. She could seldom go into society, because of her delicate health, but she was able to create within her home a sort of elegant refuge, beyond the confines of which her desires did not extend. This homestead bore her seal, her imprint, for there she was surrounded by her own personal possessions, and in it she found all the harmonies of private life—her piano, her harp, the books she loved best, the escritoire containing letters that still caused her heart to throb, her writing-table covered with sheets of manuscript, her drawings, her pictures—in a word, all those things truly personal which one loves tenderly, not for the sake of their intrinsic value, but because they form part of every minute of our lives. A discreet abode, jealously guarded, this room was the one she usually occupied, leaving it only to receive her visitors.

On the floor above hers she could hear the foot-

to oppose and contest the arguments of Monsieur de Riccé, and I remained a month at Hambourg, surrounded by people who, like myself, in no way hindered the marriage that she contracted later with the worthy Monsieur de Souza."

steps of someone very near to whom she had willingly made over the whole first-floor of the house. It was Count Charles de Flahaut, the only son of Madame de Souza, an important person known as General Néné. He had risen rapidly, being one of the heroes of the "Grande Armée," and had won honours and promotion, but he still remained General Néné to her. It was his habit at certain hours of the day to come down and converse with his mother, under whose eyes a curly-headed baby called Auguste was wont to play and gambol.

The origin of this child and the reasons for adopting it were little known in the entourage of Madame de Souza.

Who was he? What blood ran in his veins? What right had he to such marks of affection from mother and son? The inmates of the house asked no questions, lest they should be considered indiscreet. Madame de Souza, so voluble on most matters, was never expansive upon this one, and it was supposed that she had good reasons for remaining silent about something which, after all, concerned none but her. When writing to the Countess of Albany, "her very dear absent one," she would refer to a thousand subjects, light or grave, such as her impressions, her maternal fears, her novels, her pictures, her friends, her son Néné, her nervous prostration, her lassitudes on completing a new book.

She does not even forget to ask for the painter Fabre, who succeeded the proud poet Alfieri as

the tenant of the Countess's heart, or to send her items of news about all her friends in Paris, including mysterious persons whom she calls the penchants and passions of her friend.* She wrote concerning all and sundry, but never a word about Auguste, the unsolved family problem. Of course, it was noticeable to the whole household that she lavished upon the child the love and care of a grandmother. Some of her intimate friends, like Le Roi (whom she called "Eternal Little Father," as he was such a youthful centenarian),† probably knew the truth, especially the latter, who was in daily communication with the fervent letter-writer. We can readily believe that they were all sworn to silence, for not the slightest indiscretion was committed by them.‡

Many years elapsed before it was ascertained

* These penchants, or passions, referred to by Madame de Souza were the Empress Joséphine and the Queen Hortense.

† Monsieur Le Roi enjoyed to the fullest extent the privilege of perennial youth, of which Monsieur de Fontenelle would have been jealous. In 1825 Madame de Souza wrote to him as follows: "As years go by, you lose two instead of adding one to your age, for your brain is as clear and as young as when I returned from my crusade" (her emigration). He lived in the plenitude of his faculties until the age of 108, and was then loath to leave his friends, his books, and his family.

‡ A great reserve was maintained in the circle of Madame de Souza about everything relating to Auguste de Morny. Her best friend, Monsieur Le Roi, must have known the truth, but so great was his reticence that years after his death the family of Madame Le Roi de Camilly adhered to the tradition that the Duc de Morny was a natural son of Madame de Souza. There never was a mention of Queen Hortense (Maricourt, "Madame de Souza," p. 334).

that the fair curly child with arch blue eyes who played about under the watchful care of Madame de Souza was the son of Queen Hortense and of General Charles de Flahaut, or, in other words, the half-brother of Napoleon III. The name of Auguste de Morny was given to him, thanks to a legal fiction, but of course it conveyed nothing.

Charles de Flahaut! Was there ever a human being more spoilt by Fate and by women? He met with wonderful success while still a youth. A soldier at fifteen, he was Aide-de-Camp to Murat at seventeen, and a General at twenty-three. He seized Fortune by the forelock. In times of peace his brilliant luck followed him upon a battle-ground infinitely more pleasant than those on which he won his spurs. He surprised and charmed the hearts of the disconsolate belles of Europe whenever the opportunity arose between two campaigns upon the fields of Europe. The elegance of his manners, his handsome features, and the natural grace which accompanied his words, inspired sentiments which the memoirs of that time have fully recorded. The sound of his voice alone distinguished him from other men, and no woman could help looking up at him who wielded such a sweet and penetrating voice.

None has described this particular charm in better terms than Countess Potocka-Wonsowicz, who had good reason to appreciate it. The first time she noticed it against her own will was in the summer of 1806, when the French regiments

fell upon the rear-guards of the Prussian Army at Warsaw. Prince Murat and his Aides-de-Camp had taken up their quarters at the house of the grandfather of this great Polish lady, who was the grand-niece of the last King Stanislas. They had done so in a most noisy fashion, with clinking spurs, and dangling swords, and a great display of plumes and uniforms. One evening an officer of Hussars called upon the family during supper-time. He was immediately recognized by Count Maurice Potocki, who greeted him warmly. They had seen a good deal of each other in Paris. "Why, it is Charles—Charles de Flahaut!" he said, as he introduced him to those present. The Countess had heard his name before, and was keenly interested in him, because he had been much loved by a fellow-countrywoman of hers. Yielding to a womanly idea, to a caprice, and also to a presentiment of fear and to annoyance at having been taken unawares before she had time to perfect her toilet, she remained silent, with eyes downcast, wishing not to be seen, so that she might not be looked at. But the sound of a voice such as she had never heard caused her to raise her head, and to contemplate the facial expression of a man whose voice was so harmonious.*

The irresistible Flahaut sat before her, and the impression she conceived was that she, too, would have to resist this irresistible man.

* She wrote in her Souvenirs : "He is the only individual, I think, whom I ever listened to before looking at."

He was only twenty-one, and so sad was his expression that one might have thought he had already proved the emptiness of the stormiest passions. Of slight build, such as becomes a sensitive being,* with manly grace and pleasant smile, as well as irreproachable manners, he was indeed a romantic hero which dreamy souls so seldom meet with in the flesh.

In the friendly house which Flahaut had just entered he was asked many questions about his campaigns and himself. He answered all questions with modesty, simplicity, and fairness, and those present seemed to take much interest in his doings and sayings. He seemed particularly pleased to listen to Countess Potocka, and to settle any doubts that she might entertain. She, too, felt great pleasure at being in his company. A connecting-link was immediately forged between these two souls. The Countess was enthusiastic, chivalrous, an admirer of brave deeds and lofty sentiments, without allowing herself to get lost in the contemplation or analysis of chimeras. She was happy to be what she was, and to be called upon to play a part rendered enviable by her fortune, her rank, and her social relations. Her nature was naturally gay ; some might have said that it was frivolous. She felt somewhat misunderstood in marriage, but she did not lament the fact

* Rivarol could have hardly applied to him the epithet which he used about Lally-Tollendal, whom he called " This very good young man "—" This very good young man, the fattest of all sensitive men."

or look upon herself as the victim of a sacrificer. She was satisfied with herself, her children, and her surroundings. Anna Tyskiewicz, Countess Potocka, was fond of dress, of attention, and of men's society. She had wherewith to please, and she knew how to please.

Charles de Flahaut proved this fact to her with much delicacy and such friendly attentions as he would willingly have changed into complacencies of love. This was the beginning of relations tenderly cordial, shaded now and then by intervals of emotion, almost of temptation, of appeals unspoken, of desires held in bondage, all of which lent acuity to her calmer sensations. Absence did not weaken these beautiful sentiments, for he wrote her most tender letters with a hand still besmeared by the powder of battle. Whether near or from afar, he kindled a flame of perfect love in the heart of the noble foreigner. He did so with the more patience and discretion as he possessed a store of satisfactions less illusory. The beloved friend was not the only one he loved.

However idyllic his tender declarations might seem to be in form, the young officer was not content with pure romance when it came to matters of realism. He had been sketched by a fond mother upon the lines of a pure Eugène de Rothelin, but his aspirations were in no way satisfied by enjoyments of a purely immaterial nature. Such reserve as he maintained towards Potocka, and nearly forsook in the case of the beautiful Eléonore de Valette,

would have been more exemplary had not his soul and senses been absorbed by Queen Hortense. The relationship was not wholly made up of Platonism and intellectual intercourse. Results as palpable as they were undeniable very soon proved the fact.

We now approach a most delicate matter, upon which we cannot remain silent, because it has all the importance of an historical fact. It is the relationship which existed in 1810 between Hortense de Beauharnais, Queen of Holland, and Charles de Flahaut, Aide-de-Camp to His Napoleonic Majesty.

It is hardly necessary to recall the intimate life of Louis Bonaparte and Hortense, the complete discord, the total divergence of sentiments, as complete as it was incessant, which endured until their final separation. This mutual disaffection was noticeable before the pale and fugitive rays of their honeymoon had ceased to shine on the horizon. Hortense had been married for State reasons long after her heart had ceased to be her own. She had given it to Duroc, the brilliant officer, the dearest friend of the First Consul. They had sworn to belong to one another, but the policy and views of Napoleon and of Joséphine had decided otherwise.*

* The separation did not prevent Queen Hortense from showing her fullest sympathy to the family of Duroc, now Duc de Frioul. She was godmother to his granddaughter at the same time as she held the daughter of Duc de Bassano over the baptismal font. The two children bore her name. On this occasion she gave the mother of the child a bracelet and her likeness studded with diamonds.

One morning she walked up the centre aisle of a perfumed church lavishly decorated for a royal ceremony, and as the music pealed forth its melodious strains she wept bitterly under the gaze of the man she loved. She was being married to the man she did not love. Everything was regulated and foreseen, even the discordance which might result from the union of two natures so utterly opposed in this marriage which had taken place against the will of Hortense, and which Louis Bonaparte had never desired. He wrote in his Memoirs : " Never was there such a sad ceremony, never did two human beings feel more acutely that they were perpetrating a marriage both compulsory and ill-advised." As soon as the engagement had taken place monstrous allegations were made concerning the real reasons which urged the First Consul to hurry on this alliance.* Princess Murat, an enemy of the Beauharnais and of the Bonapartes, repeated these rumours to Louis, whose suspicious nature strongly resented having been chosen as a successor. He was a jealous and a strange man, a self-tormentor, a pessimist of the worst description. This afforded him his first pretext for exercising the greatest vigilance and for betraying his total lack of confidence in his wife. Every movement of hers was watched daily ; her letters were opened, and all her friends suspected, even her own brother, Eugène de Beauharnais. Violent scenes became

* Napoleon denied these statements even at St. Helena.

daily occurrences. After these the parties resorted to letter-writing, and their correspondence was full of reproaches and recriminations. When they had been separated for some length of time, they would resume their daily quarrels as soon as they met again.* As usual, both parties were at fault. Though fussy and eccentric, Louis was full of good intentions, and would have shown real affection towards his wife, whom he had compulsorily married, had she been less giddy, less fond of the adulation of other men in general and of soldiers in particular,† less accessible, and also less selfish. She should certainly have shown more discretion and reserve in her relations both at Court and in private. He really had heard too many rumours about her conduct. He was not unreasonable when he complained of the plethora of heirs.‡ But this daughter of Joséphine, who posed as a woman of principles, and whose glorious father-in-law said of her, though he was an incredulous man, "Hortense compels me to believe in virtue"; she who from pure vanity wore a victim's halo; she who posed as the most unhappy woman of her time,

* This condition of things seemed to run in the family, for her mother, Joséphine de Beauharnais, did not get on a bit better with her husband.

† This Queen might have been a little second-class person, judging by the following extracts from her Memoirs: "Of all the homages which a woman can receive, those offered by military men have always an element of chivalry which must flatter one."

‡ Cardinal Fesch wittily observed that when Hortense referred to the fathers of her children she always became confused.

and the woman least deserving of unhappiness—this Hortense de Beauharnais would not admit for a single moment that she could do wrong. She was always the victim of the sacrifice. It was therefore natural that she should find many candidates ready to dry the tears that veiled the languorous eyes of Madame Louie, and to atone to her for the injustices imposed upon her by Fate. They were recruited among those handsome officers whom she received so often in her salon. Some of them were on the staff of Prince de Neuchâtel, while others were still in the lower ranks of military hierarchy, such as the youthful and charming Lieutenant de Brach,* nicknamed Mademoiselle de Brach, on account of his fair and delicate complexion. He was none the less fiery and courageous for that.

Charles de Flahaut was the object of the warmest and most enduring affections. Thanks to his handsome blue eyes and his winning smile, he was always in the hospitable boudoirs of ladies of rank and fashion. Though poor, he possessed the best equipages in the army, and considered it quite natural that he should. His success caused much jealousy. His hidden talents were publicly discussed, and it was currently stated that they were competed for in famous alcoves. Napoleon had often resented these comments, but in vain did he condemn the vagaries, the mad

* Hortense and Lieutenant de Brach, "Autour des Bonaparte," by General Ricard.

infatuation of all women, in favour of a man who seemed to him quite ordinary, with his wasp-like waist and his interminable legs.* The great ladies whose idol he was would not be guided by the master's taste. Led by Hortense, they continued to burn incense before their god. As a result, the god was periodically sent for a change of air to the military camps and battle-fields.

De Flahaut had many imperfections. It was already evident that his curly hair would soon forsake him.

His son Morny was like him in this, as in many other matters, for he, too, became bald at a very early age. His many charms amply atoned for this slight imperfection. He was brave, almost foolhardy, in warfare ; he was a perfect man of the world, and practised Court politics like a diplomatist. He won all hearts by his air of dignity, which was slightly attenuated by a certain lackadaisical indifference and youthful levity, which becomes youth when it does not degenerate into vanity. Hortense was completely won over to him. She had singled him out and chosen him

* "Joséphine was one day praising the qualities and the wit of De Flahaut. 'Wit!' exclaimed Napoleon—'everyone can have wit such as his. You say he sings well! That is a useful quality for a soldier, who is as a rule as hoarse as a raven. Oh, he is a good-looking fellow, eh! That is what you women admire, is it not? Well, I cannot see much in him. He reminds me of a spider, a daddy-long-legs : he has not a natural build ; he is not graceful.' And as he looked down on his own fat little legs, imprisoned in silk stockings, he seemed to say, 'This is what I call grace!'" ("Memoirs of the Duchesse d'Abrantés").

before he suspected that he was the object of her esteem. While endeavouring to conceal within her breast the love with which he had fired her, she betrayed signs of it, and admitted it to Madame de Souza, who, next to Flahaut, was the one person in the world to be keenly interested in the matter. After Warsaw, he was buried in a German garrison town and apparently forgotten there. How long would he be left there, to gnaw his bit in vain ? His mother wrote to him begging him to be patient, and telling him that urgent steps for his return were being taken by one whose influence was unquestioned, by one who loved him though he knew it not. Soon afterwards he received the Emperor's permission to return to Paris and to Court. He had barely breathing time in the capital before starting once more for fresh and terrible battles. During his short stay he had ample opportunities for studying his mysterious protectress. She was neither as seductive nor as beautiful as he might have wished. Notwithstanding the flatteries that beset her, Hortense knew the limitations of her charms, which were severely handicapped by her drawn features and her eternal smile of resignation. Flahaut himself said in a letter to Countess Potocka " that she was not pretty, and that she thought she would never be loved." Her constant and general love was hidden to all under cover of a would-be brotherly affection.

Flahaut wrote : " My relations with her brother [he did not mention whose brother] afford me the

opportunity of seeing her regularly. I observed her for a long time before reciprocating her feelings ; she did not attract me as other women had done, nor did she inspire me with that passion, that exalted love, which I have conceived for you. I loved her eventually, after receiving a thousand proofs of her devotion. The more I learn to appreciate her, the more unworthy did it seem to disappoint her hope. She used to say in her sweetest tones : 'I should die of grief if I thought you could love a woman as you have loved in Poland.'* It was then I sacrificed my liberty to her. For the past two years I have endeavoured to make her happy, thinking myself happy when I realized the depth of gratitude with which she accepted my sincere affection."

It is easy to see by this pitiful tone of condescension that he had achieved his conquests without needing those great weapons which Talleyrand, his pseudo-father, might have taught him to wield. He glided softly on to victory.

The force of habit did much to increase this intimacy. Flahaut attended every ball given by Hortense, and also those at which she chose to be present. In the winter of 1810-11 they both led a quadrille, representing the Peruvians going to the temple of the sun. The beautiful diamonds and the vaporous dress of Hortense were freely discussed, as was also the elegant appearance of

* A pretty compliment, a stone with which she killed two birds.

HORTENSE DE BEAUHARNAIS

Flahaut. She loved music and composed ballads ; he sang remarkably well, and his willingness to do so was greatly appreciated. She accompanied him at the piano, and inspired his Muse as he modulated phrases of love and heroism. He was the perfect knight, " the young and handsome Dunis, ready to wage war in order to deserve her love." There was complete harmony in their sentiments, their tastes, and their mutual aspirations.

An accident such as was all too natural impeded the course of their journey on the fragrant road of love. It was one of those accidents which the *précieuses* of the eighteenth century were wont to call a blow from love. In spite of all the mystery which surrounded it, future historians were doomed to call it the birth of the Duc de Morny. This event, as well as those which preceded and followed it, occurred in the way we are about to relate.

CHAPTER II

THE YOUTH AND EDUCATION OF MORNY

Why the Duchesse de Saint-Leu visited Paris in October, 1811—An interesting declaration at the Town Hall of the Third Ward of Paris—The nominal father of Auguste de Morny—His real father—Education of the child by Madame de Souza—His sayings and doings described by his grandmother—His poetic tendencies and general character—Prophecies made concerning his future—An excursion to Germany—A dramatic meeting of Flahaut with Queen Hortense and their son, Auguste de Morny—Changes wrought by the Revolution of 1830—General de Flahaut enjoys great favour at the Court of Louis-Philippe—Morny enters the Staff College as Second Lieutenant—His early successes with women—Departure for Algeria—Morny during the campaign of Constantine—Description of the war—He resigns his commission and returns to France.

While Flahaut was nursing his rheumatism at Bourbonne, his friend, the honorary Queen of Holland, was following a similar treatment at Aix-les-Bains. Although separated, their souls were filled with the same anxieties, for they were both in the same condition of expectancy. On August 31, at 9 a.m., Hortense left the ancient city of Savoy, and went to Geneva with a passport upon which the Prefect of the new French province, called Mont-Blanc, had affixed a fictitious name. She rested a short while in Geneva, and spent a

couple of weeks at Prégny, where Joséphine had recently bought a furnished property, as if she expected some important event. She then altered her course. On September 14 she wrote to Madame de Bouchepom, her children's governess, saying " that she had to undertake a short journey for several reasons," among which she mentioned a visit to her brother. She added that she would be in Paris on October 15, and that no letters should be forwarded to her after the 20th of that month, as she would be constantly on the road. In truth, she had not really much travelling to do, for she knew beforehand the street in Paris and the house in that street which would be the terminus of her peregrinations.

During the journey to Paris unmistakable symptoms warned her that she must soon reach a safe abode. She did not seek it in her own mansion at No. 8 in the Rue Cerutti,* but in a modest house, 137, Rue Montmartre, where she could best preserve her incognito. She was accompanied by a trustworthy retainer only. The traveller took to bed as soon as she arrived. The details of her illness were not made public. It was merely stated that Madame de Saint-Leu was suffering from such acute lumbago that she shrieked night and day.†

* Now called the Rue Laffitte.

† Madame de Souza had a great talent for interpreting matters in the light in which she chose to present them—to wit, the following description, which she wrote to the Countess of Albany : " Your penchant has been very ill, but I hope if it is evil it will bring forth good. It seems that the distemper has

This is the true version of the story :

On October 21, 1811, the registrar of births, deaths, and marriages delivered a birth certificate in proper form, and in the presence of two witnesses—one a shoemaker and the other a tailor. He certified the birth of Charles-Auguste-Louis-Joseph de Morny, and, according to the declaration, this was the child of Louise-Emilie-Coralie-Fleury, the wife of a landowner, one Auguste-Jean-Hyacinthe de Morny, at Saint Domingue.*

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left her chest, and resolved itself into lumbago, which makes her scream. One does not, however, die of lumbago, and since she has had it her cough has ceased. She is, however, frightfully thin. God grant that she may be preserved to us, for she is an angel !"

* Here is the exact wording of the certificate of birth of the Duc de Morny ; we have copied it carefully from the original in the Paris Registry of the Third Ward :

" In the year 1811, on the 22nd of October, at midday, we, Mayor of the Third Ward of Paris, acting as registrar, were waited upon by Claude Martin Gardien, a doctor of medicine and an accoucheur, living in Paris, 137, Rue Montmartre, in the Mall district, who declared to us that on the day of yesterday, at two o'clock in the morning, a male child was born in that house, whom he presented to us, and to whom he gave the names of Charles-Auguste-Louis-Joseph. The said child was born of Louise-Emilie-Coralie-Fleury, wife of Auguste Jean Hyacinthe Demorny, landowner of Saint Domingue, and living at Villetaneuse, in the department of the Seine. The said presentations and declarations were made in the names of Alexis Charlemagne Lamy, shoemaker, aged forty-two, living at Paris, Rue Buffaut, No. 25, and of Joseph Manch, tailor, aged forty-five, living in Paris, No. 3, Rue des Deux Écus. The said declarer and his witnesses have signed this document, which was previously read to them.

(Signed) " Gardien.
" Lamy Manch.
" Cretté, *Deputy Mayor*."

Many searchers endeavoured, years afterwards, to unravel the mystery which is now solved. They stated that the individual who became the nominal father of the Duc de Morny hailed from Martinique, that he was a knight of the famous Order of Saint Louis, and personally indebted to the Empress Joséphine. As a matter of fact, never was there a knight of Saint Louis called De Morny or Demorny. There was an Auguste Demorny, an officer of the King of Prussia, who kindly gave his name* to the son of a dethroned Queen and a General of the First Empire. The poor fellow did not derive much profit from his noble act, for three years later he died unobtrusively in the hospital of Versailles, on April 5, 1814. It was supposed that he would be the recipient of many honours and grants of land in the island of Blacks, but notwithstanding this hypothesis, he came to a sad and most untimely end. Charles de Flahaut had preserved complete silence upon all these events. He was supposed to be ignorant of them, not only on account of the respect he owed the woman, but also for the sake of his own peace of mind, and for other personal reasons. Instead of making capital out of his good-fortune, he studiously avoided taking part in any conversation the subject of which might recall his intimacy with the daughter of the Empress Joséphine.

When the Empire had fallen, and the Bourbon

* The same name is found in a novel of the Marquis de l'Aubépine, entitled " True Ghosts ; or, The Adventures of the Chevalier de Morny " (Paris, Barbu, 1806).

monarchy had been reinstated, he was still less anxious to break silence. He had now folded his tent and given up the stormy life of camps and warfare, in order to ripen other projects in the course of a calm and non-combative existence, unfevered and untrammelled. He felt no desire to indulge in indiscretions which might have proved both troublesome and inopportune. His mother, Madame de Souza, would have been loath to betray what her particular religion, the religion of sentiment, taught her to keep in her heart, under lock and key. She was imbued with a strong spirit of sexual sisterhood, added to which her own experience in the days when Talleyrand was young lent great strength to her conviction that every woman had a right to be mysterious. She explained this frankly in a letter to an intimate friend. It was in 1833, when the Duchesse de Berry was cast into the dungeon of the fortress of Blaye, and when this Princess Royal found it impossible to hide the result of her secret marriage in Italy. " How could the Duchesse have trusted a renegade ? I should never have acted as she did—at least, I hope not—but in any case I should never have written the declaration of my own guilt. When Struensée confessed in Court that he had been the lover of Queen Mathilde, Monsieur de Chauvelin, then French Ambassador at Copenhagen, drew himself up haughtily, and said : ' A Frenchman would have told everyone all about it, but he would have confessed it to no one.' I

believe a Frenchwoman would have denied it to her death, and she would have sworn that the child in the bed had been put there by that monster of a General."

Madame de Souza expressed herself in noble terms concerning the chivalrous discretion which every gentleman should observe when the honour of a woman is at stake, but she overlooked one point that has its own importance—the right of a child to know sooner or later who is the author of its days. Thus, it happened that Morny's love for her who tried to shape his mind, soul, and reason, but who never apprised him of the true sources of his being, was somewhat marred all through life. He had been compelled first of all to ignore his origin, and then to hide it when he would have liked to proclaim it on the house-tops. He complained of all this to General de Flahaut, and he resented the fact that his father had never taken him to the paternal bosom until ample proof had been adduced of the honour which was to recoil upon himself—to wit, that of admitting among friends that he was the father of such a son.*

Referring to the account of the Duchesse de Berry, whom we mentioned just now, it is only fair to observe that she could not have done otherwise. The effects of her unfortunate liaison with Comte

* The father derived both honour and profit from his son's career. After the *coup d'état* of 1851, Flahaut was created a Senator of the Empire, and in 1864 Grand Chancellor of the Legion of Honour.

de Lucchesi-Palli could hardly be hidden. She was a prisoner under strict observation, and her first husband had died twelve years previously.*

As soon as Auguste de Morny had opened his eyes, a modest life annuity was settled upon him out of the private fortune of the ex-Queen, his mother. Hortense de Beauharnais was never very generous.†

This invisible mother was not indifferent to her offspring. The banker Gabriel Delessert was a devoted friend of hers, and the guardian of her child. He kept her informed of the progress made by the baby whose first smile she was unable to see. She also received news of him from a more direct source. When he reached the age of manhood, she still obtained frequent news of her son through a high lady at Court whom she loved because the lady loved her boy.

Auguste had remained a very short time in the hands of subordinates, who played their part in this imbroglio. He lisped his first words under the care of Madame de Souza, as a little stranger in whom much interest was taken for special reasons. He was surrounded in this house by every care and affection, and knew no want save

* Charles Ferdinand, Duc de Berry, son of Charles X., nephew of Louis XVIII., and father of Comte de Chambord, was murdered by Louvel in 1820.

† This annuity and other expenses were met by her out of the eighty thousand a year which the Emperor allowed her. Madame Cochelet, her reader, has fulsomely praised her disinterested nature, but her correspondence proves that she was particularly careful, if not mean, in all money transactions.

the lack of that expansion which speaks the whole truth. It would be idle to know the details of the first few years of his life, or to inquire what he learnt or what were his first thoughts. The beginnings of life are much the same in the case of all infants. As he threw off his swaddling-clothes, the affection of Madame de Souza grew benevolent, gracious, and enlightened. He was brought up with a certain amount of indulgence and considerable affection. Count de Maupas says "that the future statesman did not receive in youth those lessons which help a man throughout his existence"; but this is a positive error, possibly an unwitting one, though De Maupas was not his friend. De Morny's soul awoke in the warmth of a nest almost maternal, under the charming influence of Madame de Souza. His young soul was developed naturally, spontaneously, sentimentally, and did not convey the idea that it had ever been constricted, as it was in after-years, by the withering influence of ambition and the sordid pursuit of lucre.

The house was not very gay, save when lighted up by the spasmodic flashes of good-temper which Charles de Flahaut, his father, invariably indulged in. It was known that the Flahauts were not favourites at the new Court, and in consequence their friends decreased in numbers. Besides, the condition of weakness and of rapid decline of Monsieur de Souza, added to his melancholy state of mind, were the causes of constant anxiety, and

the mistress of the house was seldom able to cultivate a smile. "My only consolation is afforded me by little Auguste, who is coming on very well," she wrote. He was yet but a child, and, notwithstanding, he had already given rise to extraordinary hopes and expectations. His father often took him to see Talleyrand, who foretold a great career for the lad. This may have been judicious prophecy, or the result of self-pride upon the adherent merits of his progeny. Little by little the education of the child became the main object of Madame de Souza's waning life. She was doomed to suffer acutely when weaned from such a charming pursuit. The name of the little one, whom she had grown to love as her grandchild, which he was—or, rather, as her own child, though she dared not call him by either name—this name was constantly quoted both in her correspondence and her conversation with her intimate friends. She repeated his sayings, and referred to his games and to his school-life. When there was anything the matter with him she became quite perturbed. Though extremely weak herself, she was endowed with strength and courage when she had to relieve his sufferings. At the age of nine "Monsieur Auguste," as she called him, caused great anxiety; for he became weak and thin, as he grew too fast, whereupon she formed a courageous resolution.

"Monsieur Auguste is sad; he is getting thin. They tell me that sea-bathing will do him a lot of good, but as I know he is fond of swimming, and

very reckless, I would die if I knew he was exposed to danger in my absence. A wave would soon rob me of this charming little person. But if I go with him I shall make sure that he does not bathe unless accompanied by some old sailor, who shall be at hand to catch one of his paws in case he is carried away by a strong current."

Though very ill herself, she accompanied the lad to the seaside. She then sent the boy to the Muron School, and from there he followed the courses of the Bourbon College. Beginnings are always thorny in every walk of life. His first new governess, whom he loved and called " Good Mother," little knowing that he was so near the truth, was afraid lest too much might be exacted of his nature, which urged him to play and laugh sooner than conform himself to the arduous study of Greek and Latin. She grew sad at the thought that the cold blast of this life would chill him sooner than he expected, and said : " Poor child ! why can I not allow his childhood to evaporate, and let him enjoy this beautiful folly of youth, which passes so quickly, never to return ? But I am compelled to let him grow pale while handling heavy dictionaries. For this I would willingly crave God's forgiveness." Later, she is happy and proud to note his progress in science and in Latin, and to inform one and all of his doings.*

* " Auguste has had his third lesson in Latin verbs. I am sending you the ones he has written without a dictionary

His success was neither immediate nor overwhelming. There were lean years in which he neither got a prize nor a mention. On one prize-giving day all he got was a terrible headache from counting the successes of his school-fellows. As years rolled by, however, his pride was lashed. Distinctions and honours were soon won by him, and twice running he topped his class. He took his place among the proud guests assembled at the banquet of Saint-Charlemagne. There were great rejoicings in the house of Madame de Souza. She did her best to keep him at home on the weekly half-holidays, although he missed a class or two through it. The following note to his master affords proof of this :

"My good Monsieur Muron,

"Auguste and myself are invited to dine on Sunday next with the Duchess of Bedford. Franklin asserted that God had given us two eyes —the one to see virtue with and the other to look at vice—so I must ask you to close the vicious eye, and to allow Auguste to sleep here, as English people are in the habit of dining very late. A thousand thanks. Yesterday you looked as I would always wish you to look—the pink of perfection.

"Yours,

"A. de S."

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under my very eyes, for you know that he spends his holidays with me. When he succeeds, he is overjoyed, which is a good sign" (letter to Monsieur Le Roi, 1824).

At the beginning of the holidays, such efforts were made to make them pleasant and attractive that the boy's only regret was they could not last for always. Madame de Souza spared nothing to secure his enjoyment or his good. De Flahaut, on his side, jealously watched the development of his child, whether he was near him or not. Auguste de Morny grew under the direct influence of this young man, who treated him like his son, but whom he did not call his father. The General was now leading quite a different life. He resided in Scotland, and there he matured a resolution which transformed his whole existence. Madame de Flahaut had often thought of making a match for her son, but she hesitated to seek a precious pearl in Paris, where she found it so hard to discover one. He grew tired of waiting, and he himself put his mother's good intentions into practice. He won his wife in the aristocratic society of Great Britain, and overcame strong family prejudices which thwarted him on both sides. In this contest his strongest ally was the love the lady had conceived for him. After a long paternal resistance, based upon the inequality of fortune, the condition of political ostracism to which was condemned the late Aide-de-Camp of Napoleon I., as well as for other reasons, strengthened by national antipathy, he succeeded in marrying Mary Elphinstone, the only daughter of Lord Keith and Nairne. His success was due to the fact that she would take no other husband

but the impecunious French officer, though she could have made a brilliant match in England. Thanks to the position and fame of her father, as well as to her own birth and rank, she preferred an unhappy foreigner, as the Admiral used to say, and she afforded yet another proof of the irresistible power of love—a power already testified by countless examples in history. Be it said, however, that the unhappy foreigner was not in such a pitiable position, after all. He was a full General, a Peer of France, and loaded with titles and honours, at an age when other men are feeling their way. De Flahaut was a methodical husband of moderate passions,* but punctilious in the discharge of his duties. He had only one cause of complaint—he wished for a son, a true one, whom he could recognize. "Year after year the cradle was prepared in vain for the coming of a son and heir to a British peerage and a great French name. He christened his daughter Hortense, in recollection of a fond attachment in the past, and went on hoping for the birth of that son that was never born."

When he married he settled in Scotland, where he lavished Scottish hospitality. He seldom came to Paris except to see his mother, who greeted him each time with exclamations of joy. She had

* He wrote to his mother in very calm terms, with regular pulse and a cool brain: "I have found in my wife a very amiable and excellent friend," and Madame de Souza immediately repeated this to the Countess of Albany (letter of August 6, 1817).

found once more her Charles, her Néné, her "Eugène de Rothelin."* Since he had got into harbour, and was anchored in the peaceful creek of matrimony, she had grown accustomed to his absence. She was separated from a son whom she had yearned for with all her might, while he was exposed to the perils of war; but now that she knew him lulled by the soft influences of a peaceful existence, she awaited him calmly. She was a widow for the second time, and had been forsaken by not a few who had been her best friends in the happy days, so all her affections were concentrated in him.† He had not yet crossed that thin line which divides happy childhood and adolescence, that period in which youth is ready for action. She was extremely anxious about his future, beset as it was with great difficulties. She thought at one time it might be advisable for him to make his way on earth while residing in heaven by becoming a secular priest or entering the Society of Jesus, but she could not see the slightest disposition in his nature towards this holy calling.

* "Eugène de Rothelin" is the name of an all-virtuous novel by Madame de Souza.

† His daughter Amelia married the fourth Marquis of Lansdowne, and became the mother of the present statesman. This Henry FitzMaurice (1780-1866) was a member of the Reform Cabinet of Lord Grey (1830), and won marked sympathies in the Whig party owing to his moderation and straightforward character. He had enemies, of course, among whom was Lord Brougham, the Chancellor. It was he who said one day to Lady Holland, an ardent admirer of the Marquis of Lansdowne: "Yes, yes, I know he represents all the old ladies in England."

The army was a profession of little promise in times of peace, and the Bar was greatly overcrowded ; besides, to make progress in any of these walks of life he needed a more brilliant name than the one he bore.

Demorny ! She could not fancy him making much headway with that name as his sole support ; so despondent was she that she wondered if it would not be wiser to put him to agriculture. The more she thought of this, the more convinced she was that it would be the proper solution. She would devote his modest annuity to the purchase of a modest farm, and already she fancied him married to some respectable country-woman interested in turkeys and possessed of adequate means. He would thus carve out a quiet existence for himself, living his modest life without having to give an account of it to anyone.*

Fortunately, Madame de Souza had a great store of ideas, which changed every day in the week.

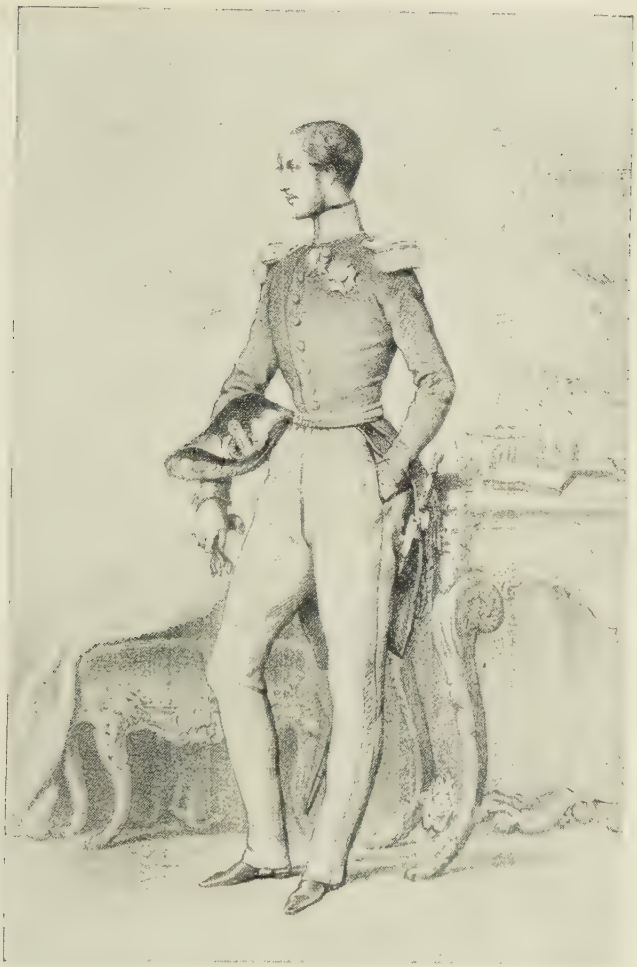
* Letter to Monsieur Le Roi of April 16, 1824. Later on she wrote to him in a spirit of philosophical detachment concerning herself and Auguste: "I had the good-fortune to learn at a very early age that it is better to keep one's counsels to oneself, to let others say and think what they choose, to indulge in no ambition, to live with a small number of friends and also a little for oneself—in a word, to know that one is always sure of a good seat at one's own fireplace. We seldom, however, have the good sense to remain there. I shall try to imbue Auguste with my views, because he will be intelligent enough to be fond of reading. I shall also teach him different games of patience, as my practical philosophy has proved to me that the time most agreeably spent is that which glides away without our knowledge."

At other times she nurtured great ambitions for this boy, whose future would have been far from modest were he only authorized to bear his father's name. He was blessed with a quick and versatile mind, a mind rather prone to flit from subject to subject than to be permanently arrested by any particular pursuit: literature, art, the elements of science, were superficially investigated by him. Being a woman of letters, Madame de Souza favoured his inclination towards poetry. Thus his mind was formed under her graceful discipline, and soon gave promises of wit and rich imagination. This led those around him to entertain a very exaggerated opinion of his talents. Madame de Souza thought that he was a born poet, and that it only required his will to kindle that flame which makes a great reputation.

Now and again she would hand him her own pen, and leave to him the task of replying to certain correspondence which she had neglected. In answering those letters he adopted the tone and style of Madame de Souza, which lent special charm to a child's letters, containing certain phrases which seemed to have been written by herself. He often tried his hand at madrigals and epigrams, feeding his literary efforts upon the impressions derived from his surroundings. Every member of the household was made the subject of his caustic wit, including Monsieur de Flahaut himself, when the boy felt inclined to pay back in his own coin the superior who chided and

guided him. Being ignorant of the close relationship existing between him and the members of the family circle in which fate had placed him, he was free from that sense of fear and respect born of filial sentiment. He was more disposed to look upon Charles de Flahaut as a cantankerous censor than as the natural arbiter of his thoughts and reasons. He therefore used to portray him in verse and prose, to the amusement of Madame de Souza. Youth is essentially mocking and enthusiastic of its nature. As it happened, Auguste had inherited his father's sarcastic disposition. Madame de Souza shows us that Charles de Flahaut made fun of everything, and that he alone was ever able to provoke the mirth of the very dull Monsieur de Souza, his step-grandfather.

All this was very well in its way as fun and pastime, but General de Flahaut, his father, had gone in for a considerable amount of sentiment in his youth, and had won his quick promotion at the point of his sword. He had practical views concerning the future of his son, for whom he foresaw a career much less precarious than that which generally awaits the children of Apollo. He decided to find positive occupation for him, and to make of him a mathematician. This upset the idealistic views of Madame de Souza. She knew that if this course were adopted her beloved pupil would be taken from her charge at a very early date. She had recently been upset by having to leave her house in the Rue de la Ville



FERDINAND-PHILIPPE, DUKE OF ORLÉANS

l'Évêque, for family and financial reasons agreed upon with her Portuguese son-in-law, Count de Villa-Réal. She had lost her garden and her beautiful roses. "Without Auguste," she had said, "I should go and live in the country!" It was for his sake, and also with the object of continuing a town life of half a century's duration, that she had moved to No. 7, Rue Saint-Florentin, where she occupied a house built by the architect Gabriel, and owned by her old friend Madame Devaine, who had recently died there. There she remained alone, or almost alone, on account of higher mathematics. Auguste was far away.

"Everything is now topsy-turvy for the sake of this poor child. This has been no fault of mine, and I am suffering for his sake. D'Alembert used to say: 'Give me a bull, and I will make a mathematician of him.' He at least admitted that to do mathematics one must be a ruminating animal, and poor Auguste is not that!" (Madame de Souza's correspondence).

In June, 1829, Charles de Flahaut took the boy with him to Aix-la-Chapelle for a course of instruction in German. Hortense happened to be travelling there. Since she had discarded the royal crown she spent her time between her residence at D'Arenenberg, on the top of a high plateau in Thurgovia, and Augsburg, a German town, and the residence of her brother Eugène de Beauharnais, who had lost the vice-royalty in Italy. She also spent a good deal of her time in

Rome, the Eternal City, which had witnessed so many sudden rises and downfalls — Rome, the residence of Lætitia, the genetrix of all the Bonapartes, the mother of the eagles, who had survived them nearly all. In winter she was unable to withstand the cold of Northern Switzerland on the shores of Lake Constance, and sought shelter at Livourne, Rome, Florence, Pisa, or Ancona. She spent the spring at Mannheim, on the Rhine, or at Augsburg. On this occasion she had directed her steps towards the ancient city of Aix, founded by Charles. Flahaut had gone there intentionally with his son, who was then seventeen. She had already seen them in secret, though the boy knew nothing of the poignancy attached to their meeting. It was but a flitting interview, for on July 20 they had returned to Scotland. The journey was most successful, and afforded the boy considerable interest before his return to Paris, where he became the prisoner of Professor Guérard, whose duty it was to unfold to him the secrets of higher mathematics. The youth was naturally much exercised by the sudden change wrought in his habits. This change had been effected in a most radical and solemn way. The strict observance of a studious life had quickly followed in the wake of a pleasant social existence, of which he had had a foretaste. Little by little he became reconciled to it. He threw himself headlong into the pursuit of arduous studies, which did not long arrest his attention. The amateur, however, does every-

thing with enthusiasm, even that which he only does for a short while.

The political tide was running in favour of the Flahauts. Louis-Philippe of Bourbon, Duc d'Orléans, occupied the throne of Charles X. He remembered that he had shared the bitter bread of exile with Madame de Souza, when she was wandering through Switzerland and Germany, and, thirty-five years later, he extended his sympathy to her son, General de Flahaut. Napoleon's late Aide-de-Camp was recalled from Scotland to take up the duties of Lieutenant-General of the King's army, with a seat in the French House of Peers. Flahaut and his five daughters came forthwith to Paris. He was a frequent attendant at Court, while his mother, more imbued with sentiments than with opinions, invoked her complete detachment from the world as a reason for not attending the functions of Napoleon's successor.

The exalted virtues of "Néné," and his fidelity to the Napoleonic cause, did not prevent him from accepting a change of masters in a most light-hearted fashion. A Lieutenant-General, a Peer of France, a guest of Louis-Philippe, he did not yet foresee that he would one day forsake royalty once more for Imperialism—he who had evolved from the old régime to the first Napoleonic dictatorship, and from the empire to the constitutional monarchy. While unmistakable tokens foreshadowed this unlooked-for return to favour and to fortune, Morny

grew in eloquence and refinement. His early years had been spent in an atmosphere fragrant with the perfume of the eighteenth century. Elegance, intellectual refinement and vanity were the examples set to him. They had borne fruit, and he knew how to put them to advantage without losing sight of the necessity to be a man of his time, of the century in which he meant to act and enjoy himself, and possess fame and fortune.

The indirect relations created by his father's alliance with the English aristocracy had sensibly helped his worldly education—that education which is not effected at school, but in one's social circle, and by the help of the people one meets there. His character and habits were strongly influenced by it, and thus can be explained the contrasts between French politeness and British stiffness, between carelessness and practical calculation, between his serious tastes and his tendency to levity—all conflicting features which constituted his whole character to the end of his days.

He was already known as De Morny, for it had become customary to write in two words the patronymic Demorny, which he owed to the complacent signature of a stranger. An air of original nobility was thus imparted to him, thanks to the social prejudice which holds a man noble among all men because he possesses a prefix. This was a first step towards the manufacture of his pedigree. A title was soon conferred upon him, and he was in no way surprised when he awoke one morning as

Comte de Morny. Discreet revelations had informed him that he might look forward to a brilliant career, in which he would be sensibly helped by his birth. He was afforded a ladder at a very early age. The Revolution of 1830 broke out while he was in his teens, and he was appointed Second Lieutenant in the army. Before firing a shot or unsheathing his sword in behalf of the "King of Barricades," he unwittingly became a hero of "July," and was given a commission "as a national guard."*

In the following year, his father was appointed Ambassador to Berlin, and he went to the Staff College. He was soon gazetted a Lieutenant in a regiment of Lancers, the *corps d'élite* of the day.

Meanwhile, his unknown brother, Louis Napoleon, was watching the course of the Imperial star upon the political horizon, which was laden with heavy clouds. In exile, on the shores of Lake Constance, he fused in the one dream chimerical designs and grave realizations. Auguste de Morny was preparing to live over again the *curriculum vitæ* of his father. During his short stay with the colours he had more than one opportunity for displaying valour and energy—a fact which the despatches of the Grande Armée had recorded in honour of Flahaut. His physical attractions, the refinement of his nature, the elegance of his social relations, afforded him the same drawing-room

* The same favour was conferred upon young Desvaux, Henri Feray, and Ney, all of whom became full Generals.

successes which had been enjoyed by the charmer of charmers, who had remained the accomplished man of the world of yore in the midst of a society which had completely altered.

From his early youth he had shown himself possessed of an impressionable and passionate nature. At the budding age he revealed tastes which endured all his life. Though compelled to dive into works of history and science, he derived much more interest from the study of life among living beings. Like all youths of his age, he preferred to analyze feminine souls, who freely part with their secrets when asked to do so in a young, fervid, and pressing tone. He was fair, tall, and very graceful. His expressive look revealed a keen intellect, as well as precocious perspicacity. He soon became a member of the *jeunesse dorée*, thanks to his personal charm and his polished manners, which never betrayed him, even when he wandered in the by-lanes of giddy pursuits. His refined manners were hereditary, and he owed much of them to the lessons of his grandmother. It was said of Madame de Souza that no one could refuse her behest. She expressed it with such charm that those who granted it felt indebted to her. Morny must have also displayed much grace in expressing his wishes, for they were immediately complied with. Under such conditions it was but natural that he should have yielded to mild dissipation, and for this he was blamed with much leniency.

His military duties did not make a slave of him, for he was granted much leisure, which he applied to obtaining distractions as varied as they were pleasant, whether in Paris or on the spot. His love affairs were well known at No. 50, Rue Saint-Honoré, the residence of Madame de Souza. A woman of the eighteenth century, she was indulgent towards others, and keenly interested in human weaknesses. With a smile of sympathy she attenuated the effects of them upon the outside world. "Auguste seems very busy with pursuits more becoming at his age than politics, but his mathematics are sadly neglected" (Madame de Souza to Madame Le Roi).

He often returned to serious study, however, and his efforts were not confined to mathematics. During a period of arduous work, but of short duration, he acquired a vast fund of solid knowledge.

Garrison life is very easy at Fontainebleau, and he had plenty of time there for work and play. Fired with a noble zeal, he asked the Minister for War to allow him to extend his course of study at the officers' library. He wished to explore the vast domain of social and religious problems, so he pluckily dived into a number of serious works full of abstruse considerations. He perused theological records, and thought himself capable of solving after a few months' study those unfathomable questions in the solution of which philosophers have uselessly expended their lives. His brilliant intellect threw a light upon the nebulous

confusion which confronted him. When his effort had been accomplished, his brain remained perfectly clear, but he was radically cured of any desire ever to resume his investigations. He had learnt nothing, but had become, if anything, more sceptical and more indifferent. In truth, he was hopeless in metaphysics, for they could not long arrest his attention. Morny was not a man who could linger in the dusty atmosphere of a library, even in that of the military library of Fontainebleau. He was eager to smell powder on the battle-field.

The well-ordained life of a man consists of periods clearly defined. Family education, followed by school and college, absorbs that of the adolescent ; the early years of youth are devoted to military service, through which a man is steeled and equipped for victory in the forthcoming social strife. The phase which decides one's fate occurs while ambition is keenest. The rest of one's life is given over to reaping the bountiful or meagre harvest of such work as has been done. Morny had reached the age of daring and self-confidence—that age at which campaigns are undertaken with a light heart. Moreover, he understood the profit that would accrue to him from passing through this school, and the benefit which a certificate of bravery duly earned would some day confer upon his many aspirations. In 1834 he was seconded for service in Algeria as Aide-de-Camp to General Trézel. His departure

caused many tears to flow, and the Duc d'Orléans wrote to his brother, the Duc de Nemours : " By the way, talking of disconsolate women, I hear that Morny is leaving for Africa."

This African campaign exercised a great fascination upon the minds of young Frenchmen, because it was daring, adventurous, almost poetic. Their imaginations conjured up pictures of flying expeditions over mountains and through ravines, of impetuous charges in the plains, of surprises in ambush, of all sorts of stormings, of raids and charges. Their ambition grew with their enthusiasm. At the beginning of the war the officers, confident in their stars and full of hope, yearned to give proof by day and night of their prowess against the sons of the desert. Expedition followed expedition in quick succession. They were not in the nature of a regular campaign upon the Rhine or the Danube, but on African soil they afforded glory and the hope of being mentioned in despatches, not only to an army corps, a regiment, or a company, but also to the youngest Sub-Lieutenant or the humblest recruit. Morny did not seek promotion so much as the opportunity of distinguishing himself. He knew that this guerilla warfare would yield a generous crop of honours, because many dangers would have to be faced, and he foresaw that his efforts would be requited when the time came for maturing wider and more practical plans. He joined the expedition of Mascara, and from the very onset

he earned the esteem and the eulogy of Lieutenant-General Duc de Mortemart.

In the hottest skirmishes he exposed himself with an audacity that was only equalled by his luck. The climate, however, tried him sorely, and he fell a victim to acute gastritis, an old ailment from which he had suffered at college. He was bled freely, and thus saved from congestion of the lungs. All his friends in France, and especially Madame de Souza, lived in constant fear. She herself was in very bad health, but all her thoughts were devoted to Auguste.

"I shall submit to everything," she said, "provided Auguste comes back to me. This is all I ask of God and of medicine. I love this child as though he were the fruit, the result, of any good I may have done. In him I have invested my frail hope, but at my age hope is ever attended with much fear."

Morny obtained home-leave for reasons of health, and the news of his return caused much joy to her who had so longed for it. Soon he recovered, and was sent to Nevers. Life was very pleasant in this garrison town, and Morny forgot his gastritis. The fire of youth was rekindled in his soul, and the only fever from which he suffered now was the fever of enjoyment. He made a short and happy stay in Nevers, for in 1835 he returned to Algeria, and was once more in the thick of the fight.

He had ample opportunities for testing his

courage and his luck. In one engagement alone he was hit four times, and had a miraculous escape, inasmuch as his cap, tunic, and top-boots bore traces of the bullets.*

The same year he was mentioned in general orders for saving the life of General Trézel under the walls of Constantine. It is well known that the two expeditions of Constantine were no child's play. The second one was undertaken in order to avenge the failure of the first. Marching was extremely difficult over the rough and mountainous ground, where cavalry could only play a small part. The pass leading to the point of attack consisted of mud and rock.† The strenuous resistance of the Arabs, the hardships inflicted by dreadful weather, fever, an epidemic of cholera, and the enemy's fire played havoc with the column. The roar of the storm and of the elements let loose rang out in unison with that of the cannon and with the crackling of the guns. During endless days rain fell in torrents, while the wind blew in wild gusts. The number of sick and wounded was

* His father had a similar escape at the Battle of Ostrovne, during the Russian campaign. The following account of it was written on August 27, 1812, by Madame de Souza to the Countess of Albany : " In the engagement of the 25th a bullet shot sideways at a distance of 10 feet, cut his aiguillette in four, tore his tunic, and cannoned off the Lord knows where, without even touching his shirt. It seems incredible that his arm was not broken, or that he was not shot through and through. It was I who felt the shudder of death, my dear, and I cannot get over the awful sensation."

† The French troops had not yet opened the road from Djidjelli to Constantine via Milah.

appalling. The horses died in hundreds, while the shortage of commissariat was a source of great anxiety. The men seemed overcome and defenceless against the cold wind. They lay huddled together, shivering, stiff with the cold, and stupefied by hunger. Notwithstanding, they answered the call to arms, and the taking of Constantine was but the crowning act of many heroic deeds.

Morny paid heavily during this terrible campaign of Kabylia. His frail constitution was ill-suited to the hardships, which included camping night and day in the mud. He was once more attacked with dysentery, which exhausted him completely. What with sleeping on the hard ground or bivouacking in pools of water, fed on biscuits that had to be broken with a hammer, his strength gave way, and he applied for leave. As his application was refused, he sent in his papers, and his military career came to an end. He did not regret it much, knowing that he would have had to wait many years before being promoted to the higher ranks of the army. He had not the necessary patience to await promotion step by step, for he thirsted for notoriety, fired as he was with ambition. He had fought at close quarters without flinching, and had afforded ample proof of courage, firmness, and of daring. He handed back his sword to seek promotion upon other fields, as adventurous as those upon which he had borne himself so bravely.

THE DUKE DE PERSIGNY

CHAPTER III

A PERIOD OF EXPECTATION

Return from Africa—Social greetings—Morny's success at Court, in salons and boudoirs—A period of easy and fashionable life, with intervals of journalism, speculation, and business—Morny and the Comtesse Lehon—He is thrust into active business by an army of rich and influential men—Lucky speculations in Auvergne—Morny is returned to the Chamber of Deputies by the electors of La Limagne—He bides his time under a constitutional monarchy—Some features of the society of the day—A skilful evolution of General de Flahaut and of Morny upon the eve of the Revolution—After the February storm—They hesitate a moment between going to Frohsdorff and a visit to the Hôtel du Rhin—De Morny decides to throw in his lot with the Bonapartists—The two brothers meet—The true state of their feelings—Their relations are strained at first, but they come to a definite understanding—The prologue of the impending drama.

Auguste Demorny, now known as Comte de Morny, was twenty-seven years of age when he left the army and appeared once more in society. He was eagerly awaited.

The father whom he owed to a chance love affair, General Comte de Flahaut, had spared no effort to prepare a brilliant welcome for his son. He had succeeded to a great extent, although he and his

wife, Lady Keith, were most unpopular at Court.*

Morny had a proof of this as soon as he arrived. Moreover, the friendship of Princes ensured to him an affectionate and flattering greeting at the Tuileries. His was indeed a triumphant return. The red ribbon of the Legion of Honour enhanced the distinction of evening dress. His father had likewise revealed himself at the Court of the "Usurper" during the short spells in which the roar of the cannon was replaced by strains of festive music. The son, like the father, was the recipient of fulsome compliments and gracious smiles, distinguished among all the young men of the constitutional Court.

As a child, he had had a clear vision of the best style and of supreme elegance, as exemplified at the receptions of his grandfather Talleyrand. As a youth, he had lived in the intimacy of Pozzo di Borgo, of Metternich, and of Alexander de Girardin; and although such company afforded neither lessons nor examples of morality, it taught him how to succeed with women, courtiers, and Princes. He soon conquered a position in this social set, composed of the flotsam and jetsam of the

* Rumours of their unpopularity had reached London, whence they travelled to Paris. These rumours were in no way attenuated by the pen of the Duchesse de Dino. "I have learnt on all hands that Monsieur de Flahaut made himself unbearable to all, through his temper, his bitterness, his arrogance, and his pride; he will soon be as unpopular as his wife" (letter to Princess Radziwill, December, 1835).

old régime, and of the parvenus of the Empire who then constituted "high society." The romantic legend surrounding his birth added Napoleonic distinction to his charming personality. He stood out in bold relief in this very ordinary circle. He was highly cultured and possessed most winning manners, which were greatly prized by the ladies. He never gave the impression of one who would become a fervent devotee to laborious pursuits. His tastes seemed frivolous. Being blessed with a wonderful memory and a quick comprehension, it was obvious that he would never have to do much work in order to master any difficulty. His verses were considered witty by women, because he displayed much wit in their company. He also composed ballads, which he sang very pleasantly, and such talents were valuable in intimacy.

He was simply a retired officer whose only official relations were those he had with the King's sons, so he sought the quickest means of attracting attention. He became the arbiter of fashion and the leader of dandies. He had great taste in dress, and his military deportment and bronzed features added much to his personal appearance. He proceeded on the lines of Brummell and D'Orsay as long as the whim lasted. He was worshipped by all followers of fashion, who voted their thanks to him for introducing a new coat or some daring innovation in dress. The fashion papers commented at length upon a certain evening waistcoat braided with

gold which he had conceived. He exercised much influence upon styles of furniture. Before making a personal fortune and housing his household goods in the Champs-Élysées, he lived with his father in the Rue d'Angoulême, since rechristened the Rue de Morny. The house was full of souvenirs of art and love. It was beautifully decorated, and had been built by the Comte d'Artois on the plans of Chalgrin the architect. It was intended for Louise Contat, the beautiful and witty friend of the King's son. It was the first residence built along the Champs-Élysées, and had withstood the storms of the Revolution. An Italian Ambassador of the name of Marescalchi had occupied it, and Flahaut remembered a famous ball given there in 1809 in honour of Napoleon. It was afterwards tenanted by the Comtesse de Durfort and her daughter, Madame de Juigné, until 1830, when young Morny resided there with the wife and the daughters of his father. It was from there that he took wing every night to fly to success, full of hope and confidence. None could create a better impression in a drawing-room, or make his presence more desired or his absence more regretted. He was not as handsome as a Walewski, and though his smile was most becoming, it was seriously hampered by the irregularity of his teeth. He had a wide forehead, capable of containing mighty projects, but alas! it was quite devoid of hair. Later on during the elections Armand Marrast called him the " youngest and the baldest of candidates."

Before throwing himself into politics he entered into all the pursuits of fashionable society. He also devoted much time, money, and attention to horse-racing, and among other occupations he sought that of a journalist, thus acquiring precious knowledge which was to stand him in good stead in his later industrial and financial operations. Comte Walewski, a natural son of Napoleon I. and of the Polish Comtesse, Marie Walewska, had just become the proprietor of an evening paper. He had left the army of Africa and resigned his commission in the 4th Hussars, in order to guide the destinies of the *Messager*. His hand hesitated much more in this task than it had done when wielding a sword against the Arab foe. The policy of the *Messager* was one of prudent inspiration, for its leading lights were anxious to avoid all collisions with persons or institutions, and had resort to diplomatic methods in preference to the stirring campaigns which are generally fought by the "daily Press." Cold logic was the order of the day at the *Messager*, where Morny had many friends. He often went to the editorial office with the intention of joining the staff, and each time he decided to write an article on the following day. Walewski had inaugurated a weekly article, which he entrusted to Vicomte d'Alton-Shée, one of his leader-writers, who, however, did not relish the idea of being tied down to a set task. He offered it to Morny, with the honours and remuneration accruing from it. There and then they drew up the programme

of this collaboration, which was to be exemplary. Each one was to follow his own bent—De Morny in the Conservative sense, while D'Alton-Shée was to express himself in the tone of a more advanced Opposition. The result was to be achieved with the greatest harmony. Whenever De Morny had to work he was detained by some social duties, so it fell to D'Alton-Shée's lot to do the whole work. As a result, Morny's project never matured. He only wrote one article in the *Messager*, and that upon the sugar industry, at a time when the question interested him for his own sake and for that of the public. It was well known that he was held in high favour by the Royal Family. His beautiful and loving protectress, Comtesse Lehon, the Belgian Ambassadress, could alone have secured for him the favours of the Court, had not his father been a Peer of France and a Lieutenant-General in the Army. Moreover, he was possessed of personal charms and held every trump in the pack.

Though his influence at the Court of Louis-Philippe was not a preponderating one, it was vouched for by many private and social distinctions.

This Court lacked prestige, and also good society. There was a *laissez-aller* in its etiquette, a defect fully realized by the King, who was too subtle and refined not to notice it. The titled families of France held aloof from it. They were disdainfully indifferent, for under him they could

hope for no honours, no sinecures, as they might do under a Napoleon; nor had they any reason to fear the drastic confiscations which "the other one" enforced when he wished to compel the recalcitrants to haul down their flags. In a word, the followers of the old régime sulked to their hearts' content. The adherents of the elder branch remained in their residences, surrounded by the insignia of the fallen Monarchy. They visited one another, and exchanged their sarcastic expressions concerning the unsatisfactory state of things. This defection on the part of Court circles left many gaps at the Château, which could not have been more noticeable under a republic. This caused serious injury to princely gatherings, where splendid costumes and a brilliant display of wealth and titles were indispensable.

Much trouble was taken to harmonize the magnificence of the surroundings with the decorative value of the guests. A warm welcome was afforded to any and every element of distinction, French or foreign, which could by its presence enhance the dignity of the proceedings. In 1834 the coming to the Tuileries of a British lady of rank was hailed almost as an event. The Duchesse de Dino recorded it sarcastically in her diary: "Lady Jersey has been to the Tuileries, where the Duc d'Orléans remained at her orders. The arrival of this aristocrat from the other side of the Channel has created an immense sensation."

Lady Jersey was eaten with vanity and bereft

of all wit. She came of plebeian extraction, being the daughter of Robert Child, the banker. The great old aristocracy of the Monarchy had made itself so scarce that it could not be found.

It was quite natural and opportune that noblemen by birth, like Morny, Le Duc de Nemours, the Marquis de la Valette, and a few more, should constitute a brilliant circle in such commonplace surroundings. They were indispensable at a Court that moved in such a heavy atmosphere, and at which the manners of some of its guests were either starchy and stiff to a degree, or painfully familiar—to wit, those of the Deputy Monsieur Dupin, who addressed Madame Adélaïde, the King's sister, as "My beautiful young lady." The Duchesse de Dino thus described this Dupin: "He is a coarse, heavy, noisy pedant, full of the most objectionable plebeian insolence." This common fellow spent a few months in London in 1834, and on his return proceeded to criticize the King and the Court. The former, he said, did not "*throne it* sufficiently," and the latter was not sufficient in numbers.*

* We append the description of the great ball given by the Duc d'Orléans in 1834: "The Duke has told me a great many things about yesterday's ball—this is what I can remember: Supreme elegance, a magnificent supper, flowers, statues artistically grouped, dazzling lights, new liveries, powdered lackeys in new liveries, a profusion of diamonds, elegant women. The Queen was charmed and Madame Adélaïde rather piqued. She said, 'This is Louis XV. style.' All the men were in uniform, but in trousers and boots, while the Duc de Nemours wore the uniform of a General, with breeches and silk stockings.

In such a mixed gathering there were happy contrasts of wit, beauty, and true distinction. They were all the more prized as they were few and far between. As a result these daring, refined, and handsome young men were christened "The Gilded Youth," and became the idols of the middle-class beauties who frequented the Tuileries.

Auguste de Morny was the friend, and at times the lucky rival, of the Duc d'Orléans, the King's eldest son. They both competed in wit, youth, and daring. The Duke was tall, handsome, and courageous. He devoted much time to his personal appearance, and also to his love affairs. Some unknown grace was the cause of a serious altercation between Morny, the Alcibiades of the day, and the Duke, the most amiable and best loved of Princes. They met and fought in the seclusion of a private park. Two bullets were exchanged; no harm was done, and the combatants were friends once more before they left the grounds.

Morny did not confine his investigations to the spheres of high society, however kindly he was treated there. He found more pleasant temptations upon the fringe of society which he frequented with the giddy generation of 1835, whose lavish

He indeed looked a nobleman. The Duc d'Orléans asked me if I did not prefer to see a military man in trousers and boots, and this was my answer : ' The Emperor Napoleon, who won so many battles, wore silk stockings and buckles on his shoes, even when dining alone with the Empress ' " (" Memoirs of the Duchesse de Dino," December, 1834).

extravagance became feverish and daily a need. The follies of the carnival season, the invention of the Cancan, the inauguration of fast clubs and racecourses, were all the work of that generation. Morny did not pretend to be wise enough to avoid such dissipations, but he had sufficient sense to take part in them while remaining the complete master of his will.

Towards 1840 an elegant member of society was classed as such if he walked past Tortoni's at five, visited the Café de Paris two hours later, and went in the evening to the Union Club and the Jockey Club. Morny did not frequent the above-named houses of "supping Paris," but he belonged to the Jockey Club and followed the stream. He was often seen in the salons of the Café de Paris in the early hours of the morning, when the loud laughter of Mademoiselle Malaga resounded through the supper-rooms.*

Viscount d'Alton-Shée was his faithful companion, and together they drank deep in the cup of dissipation. Twelve or fifteen years later, when Morny had reached the zenith of power, thanks to the resurrection of the Empire, he remembered his old friend, who, like himself, was still engaged in the pursuit of pleasure. On

* De Villemessant described her as a miraculous beauty, joyful in the fullest sense of the word, fond of feasts and luxury, heedless and prodigal. She created a great sensation in 1840. The words "modesty" and "virtue" conveyed nothing to Malaga, and she seemed quite surprised that anyone should take offence at some of her peculiarities.

December 4, 1851, the Peer of France was suddenly transformed into a Socialist,* and denounced as such to the triumphant Bonapartists. A warm discussion took place between General Saint-Arnaud, who insisted upon the expulsion at least of the conspirator. Morny did not deny the necessity for this measure, but he saw that it was not enforced. Six weeks later De Morny resigned his seat in the Cabinet, and D'Alton-Shée wrote him the following grateful and dignified letter :

" My dear Morny,

" It was thanks to your old friendship that I was not arrested, exiled, or transported for life. I accepted your services as a matter of course, because I should have rendered the same to you under similar circumstances. Now that you are no more in power, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

(Signed) " D'Alton."

* This *volte-face* had seemed very strange during the latter years of the reign of Louis-Philippe. Count d'Alton-Shée's noble colleagues could not believe their ears when they heard him eulogizing the Convention, calling Metternich a cruel and corrupt old man, telling the Duc de Modena that he was an undersized hero, and indulging in apophthegms of the reddest hue. As we have mentioned the Duc de Modena, we quote from the Duchesse de Dino the following passage, with reference to the strange persecutions endured in this small Italian principality : " The Duc de Modena is a little tyrant in his States. One of his most vexatious enactments is to cut off the whiskers and the moustaches of all those whose passports are not in order. This is all the more trying on account of the prevailing fashion, as prisoners only are clean-shaven nowadays " (1835).

The incident redounded to the credit of both men. As we have said, Morny, D'Alton-Shée, La Valette, Fernand de Montguyon, and other leaders of fashion, enjoyed to the fullest extent all the liberties that are granted to youth.

The grandson of Madame de Souza did not boast much of his escapades to the Comtesse Lehon. The house towards which his steps turned daily—the house that was his own on account of the warm affection displayed to him by its occupier—was the luxurious home of the golden-haired Ambassadress, the blue-eyed Iris who fired poetic imaginations. Every student of the Second Empire knows how much De Morny owed to the fast and enduring friendship of the Comtesse Lehon. All the sympathy of her soul went to Flahaut's son when he was only a Lieutenant. She then kept up a regular correspondence with Queen Hortense, to whom she gave news of young Morny. The two women remained slaves to his interests, and worked for his promotion until he became Ambassador, President of the Corps Législatif, and a married man.

The Countess was famous for her beauty and for the lavishness of her entertainments. She was one of the leaders of Parisian society. Her invitations were considered favours by diplomatists, courtiers, writers, and artists. Princes had adopted the habit of frequenting her salon as though it were an annex of the Tuileries. One of

her most ardent admirers was the Duc d'Orléans, but in this charming circle Morny had the privilege of being christened the Aréféré.

She smiled upon his youth, and encouraged as well as helped him by her fortune in satisfying his ambition. She was the daughter of a Brussels banker and the wife of Charles Joseph Lehon, one of the founders of the Belgian monarchy and King Leopold's Ambassador in France. She was, therefore, armed with wealth and influence. As Morny often told her that he sighed for some better occupation than that afforded by sport, horses, and racing (he did not mention anything of his gallant pursuits), she believed that his present existence could not indeed satisfy him. She suggested to him a wider perspective, which would afford him better food for his thirst of conquests, and she decided to interest him in important industrial and financial combinations. Wealth is the highroad to independence. He wished to be rich, and proceeded to acquire the necessary knowledge for attaining his ends.

Auvergne is a long way from Paris, but it was there he went to try his hand, in the midst of the large estates that were owned by the Countess, his partner, his Egeria, and his friend. He had made some very useful friends there when quartered at Clermont-Ferrand, and with their help he was enabled to start large factories for the production of home-grown sugar. The importation of colonial sugar was then a momentous question

in economics. Huge interests were at stake, but so ably and luckily did he manage affairs that he was elected President of the Sugar-Growers' Association by four hundred of its members.

He inspired confidence and believed in himself. Being intelligent and fully appreciated, he was induced to soar still higher. He had reached the age of thirty, the youngest age under Louis-Philippe at which a French citizen could become a Member of Parliament. A vacancy occurred in the very constituency which he had enriched while growing rich himself. He called on the electors and solicited votes from village to village. He was seductive and daring, one of those candidates who storm a heart with a smile. Count Duchâtel had prophesied on the eve of the election that Morny would not get ten votes, but he did, and thousands more. In 1842 he was Member for Clermont.

At first he did not play a conspicuous part among the legislators of the constitutional monarchy. His speeches created no lasting impression, although they always expressed a sensible and positive idea. He did not display gifts of great oratory, nor did he pretend to possess them. When he did address the House from time to time, he adduced such solid arguments as are known as convincing factors in debate. His voice was somewhat colourless and he spoke very slowly. The heat of eloquence was no more upon his lips than in his heart. He imparted to his words that

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mathematical lucidity which his adversaries fully appreciated. He had little admiration for speeches or speech-makers, owing, no doubt, to that very human disposition which prevents us from keenly admiring in others the faculties denied to us by Nature. He had already put into practice his hatred of periphrases.

He sometimes wished to take up the pen. As he could not act, he theorized, and endeavoured to embody in a doctrine his views on politics and social economics. In 1846 the power of the Press was a reality, notwithstanding the restrictions imposed upon it. He thought of joining a strong paper just as he would have become one of a garrison in a fortified place from which vigorous sorties were effected. Véron, the proprietor of the *Constitutionnel*, had expressed the wish to take a partner. Upon learning this, Morny asked his friend Granier de Cassagnac to begin negotiations. They were highly successful, for six years later the paper was sold to Mires, and Morny's share in the profits was £20,000. This was a very good investment, which proved that the honour and responsibilities of Parliamentary life had not made him neglect the practical side of life.

Money was indispensable in politics, but politics yielded a very generous return upon all advances made. Without compromising his position, Morny utilized it in his business affairs. But the creative force of production requires continuous efforts in all industries. Being impatient, he sought more

expeditious means by which to achieve success. He devoted his attention to speculation, which builds up fortunes in a day and shatters them in a night. He sought the favours of that capricious goddess who by a turn of the wheel can exalt her favoured ones to the zenith of wealth and power or lay them low at her sweet will. Here again his proverbial good-luck stood to him, and he realized an immense fortune.

While Morny was engaged in heavy speculations, bulling and bearing the Vieille-Montagne mines, racing, collecting works of art, and enjoying the company of the Comtesse Lehon, the Government of July, of which he was one of the mainstays, was face to face with grave difficulties.

For some time a wise and paternal Government had assured the peace and welfare of all. The nation worked, speculated, and enjoyed life to the fullest extent. Political passions, however, were only slumbering. They were soon to awaken with renewed vigour. Already it was felt in many quarters that they were fermenting, awaiting an opportunity to give vent to their fullest strength. Significant speeches were made from the tribune of the Chamber, the echoes of which resounded far and wide. The Government was reproached with having repudiated the most sacred hopes of humanity through its selfish desire for peace. It was also accused of providing Europe with a demoralizing spectacle by remaining idle

while progress was the order of the day, by stifling the voice of the Press, and by neutralizing the good effects of a great Revolution made by the people.

As soon as the Member for Clermont took up the study of the political situation, he realized that a conflict between the throne and the nation was near at hand. De Morny, who was treated as a companion by the sons of Louis-Philippe, has been accused of being a very poor friend to them or to their dynasty. It is true that his illusions concerning its solidity were of short duration, because he knew that this régime was bereft of all definite sense of power. Among others, he openly expressed his surprise at the lack of sequence in its enactments and at its total want of strength or energy. Men took office as though the whole thing were a joke. The day that the Duc Victor de Broglie resigned he danced about for joy, and when Marshal Soult asked him what was the matter, he replied: "My dear Soult, we have resigned!" The old soldier replied: "You came into office a wise man, but to-day you strike me as a lunatic." One would think that Morny had been present when Talleyrand said to the King, concerning one of his ministers: "You will never make anything of Monsieur Thiers. He has the making of an excellent Ambassador, but he is one of those men whom one cannot turn to account unless they are satisfied. Now, he is a man who never will be satisfied."

In 1847 Morny was at the head of a group of untried men, who realized that the Monarchy was seriously compromised through its own fault, and who would have liked to save it from itself, but the Ministerial majority was asleep. The Conservative policy consisted of digesting the things acquired. "What has been done?" cried the Deputy. "What do you mean to do? Nothing, always nothing—nothing in every shape and form."* People had made up their minds to live day by day, but the Member for Clermont was wiser than Thiers and other eloquent party leaders. He knew that a definite settlement of accounts was imminent. Such knowledge did not increase his dynastic zeal or his sense of devotion. He was an Orleanist, as he might have been a follower of the Bourbons—a pure Legitimist or White Banner man, according to circumstances. His instinct of love for order was wedded to his eager desire to succeed. His mind was fed upon absolute scepticism about external forms of power, provided he was able to enforce it.

In the meanwhile, the Orleans family, to which he was bound by strong ties of personal sympathy, still held the reins of power. He endeavoured to

* Some years previously Princess de Lieven was questioning Berryer, the famous orator, upon the events of the morrow, and the hopes or fears he entertained concerning the future prospects of the Government. "You believe that the present Government will last?" "No," replied Berryer. "Do you believe in Henry V.?" "No." "But what do you believe in, then?" "Nothing, because in France nothing can be permanently established."

imbue its members with a proper sense of the dangers ahead as long as he thought they had any chance of salvation. Before the last Parliamentary session he besought of Louis-Philippe to beware of the future, and he did so in terms so energetic that they might have been interpreted as the offer of his energetic collaboration. The King only smiled, for he was full of optimism. He pulled his ear in a friendly manner, saying: "Have no fear, young man. France is a country that one can manage by the help of public officials." He forgot to add: "And by that of Generals and soldiers."

Seeing that he was wasting his time, Morny began to prepare his own conversion. For some time past his father, the recipient of many favours at the hands of Louis-Philippe, had been looking the other way. Standing aloof and endeavouring to cover his retreat, he advised his son to do likewise.

Events were maturing rapidly, and extreme conclusions were imminent. Louis-Philippe had yielded to the popular rioters in order to avoid bloodshed. This was a grave mistake in the eyes of Morny, whose indulgence towards political crime was such that he could not understand why a crown should be sacrificed by the avoidance of one day's energetic work. He often said in later years that if the sitting of February 24, 1848, had been presided over by the King instead of Monsieur

de Sauzet, the Chamber of Deputies would never have been invested.

This event had produced considerable consternation among the wealthy classes frequented by our hero. Many of them were in the ranks of the Opposition, but essentially Conservative for all that, and they supported a Constitutional Party sooner than risk a change which might result in an unknown quantity. Their political creed was faithfully expressed by the following conversation between two men of the world:

"For the past ten years the King has been accused of corruption. Now you see, my dear fellow, that the accusation must have been a false one. He did not corrupt enough."

"But what about the bartering of votes in the House—the Pritchard case, and many others?"

"Quite so; but, still, he did not corrupt enough, because if he had corrupted everybody there would have been no Revolution."

An amusing sally, which did not alter facts, however. The Revolution had been a very unpleasant surprise to Morny, for it upset all his financial schemes. He awoke one morning to find himself a ruined man,* and was in no mood to join hands with the people. Neither his tastes nor his upbringing had fitted him for the new order of things. He felt alone and helpless. How long would he have to remain with his arms

* In 1851 he was compelled to sell his collection of pictures and his house in the Champs-Élysées.

folded, notwithstanding his energy and his desire to play an active part in the events of France? He tried to shape some definite course, and in despair he almost joined the Legitimist camp. An unforeseen incident very nearly bore him to Frohsdorff. He was within an inch of undertaking the pilgrimage. So little is this fact known that we relate it as we found it in the journal of Princess Mélanie de Metternich: "Monsieur de Morny called to see Clement* during this month [August, 1848]. He said the only chance of saving France was to call Henry V. to the throne. What he saw at Clermont had proved to him that the Orleans branch was lost for ever in France. De Morny wants to go to Frohsdorff unknown to his friends."

But he soon realized that the noble defenders of the Fleur-de-Lis would be in no more hurry to unsheath their swords or share their wealth than their Orleanist rivals, so he altered his course, and instead of going to Frohsdorff, he repaired to the Hôtel du Rhin, the residence of his brother, Louis Bonaparte.

While the Republic was still intoxicated by its ephemeral victory, Pretenders and saviours of the country came forward eager to help. The ghost from Ham, "the nephew of *the uncle*," returned with his pockets full of money and with promises of titles and laurels for all who helped him. To

* Prince Clement de Metternich, the famous diplomatist, and Chancellor of the Austrian Empire.

the nation he proffered promises of peace, glory, and national security.

De Morny became a Bonapartist as soon as the brilliant destinies of Louis Napoleon loomed upon the horizon. Until then he had had few opportunities of approaching or even of seeing his brother. The first time their eyes met was in England. General de Flahaut was driving through London with his daughter, the future Marquise de La Valette. They were saluted by a pedestrian of very ordinary appearance, and Flahaut returned his salute with eagerness and respect. Morny asked him the name of the gentleman to whom he bowed with such reverence. "Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte," he replied, with an imperceptible smile. Nothing more was said then. Although he lived up to the part of Pretender as much as possible, Monsieur Bonaparte's position in London was a modest one. The only two people who believed in him were Persigny and Miss Howard.* Shortly before his arrival the King of England had almost expelled the Duke of Sussex from Court for having harboured Lucien Bonaparte, and so great was his hatred of the Corsican family that when Jérôme, late King of Westphalia, sought an order from him, he replied: "Let him go to the devil!" He little thought then that the restoration of the Bonapartists was ever possible.

* The future Emperor of the French lived at No. 17, Carlton House Terrace.

While Staff-Captain Morny was fighting the Kabyles under the walls of Constantine, he did not know that he had a brother an Artillery Captain in the Swiss Army. He only became aware of the fact some years after resigning his commission.

The two brothers were not bound together much by any great feelings of affection. There is no evidence that the somewhat callous De Morny was moved by the abortive attempt on his brother's life at Strasburg, or that he was in any way affected by the incident at Boulogne. He could hardly have foreseen the wonderful surprises held in store by the future at a time when a sad young man with a German accent solemnly claimed the inheritance of an Empire on the sole plea that he was " the nephew of the other."

Morny had ministered no consolation to the prisoner of Ham. There had been no correspondence between the two brothers, and their hearts never beat in unison until they became necessary to one another. The force of common interests effected that which mutual attraction had left undone.

In the latter days of the Orleanist monarchy Flahaut took less trouble than ever to disguise his conversion to the Imperialist faith. As the clouds grew thicker upon the political horizon, he spoke of little else in the family circle and trained the hesitant ambition of his son. Morny understood how urgent it was to take a decisive step during the early stages of such important events.

The relations between Louis and Auguste had been so cool that they both felt the necessity of a connecting-link. They discovered one in the person of the supple and obliging Bacciochi, a cousin of Louis Napoleon, whom Morny had met in society. They had an interview in the old mansion of Castellane. Bacciochi lived there with Persigny. It was since razed, and a portion of the Élysée was built where it stood. It was then a kind of Bonapartist office. Mocquart, a lawyer and an old beau of 1822, resided there with Auguste Chevalier. The latter became private secretary to Napoleon. The Prince's friends often met there to discuss their plans and future hopes. The threshold of the old palace of Castellane was the vestibule which enabled Morny to gain access to the Élysée. This he did in 1849, when he had just been re-elected Member for the Puy-de-Dôme, thanks to the help of the famous Committee of the Rue de Poitiers. The first interview gave rise to no special effusions. Louis Napoleon extended to Morny the kindly welcome which he afforded to all who came to him as partisans or allies. There was no mention of their childhood, the evocation of which might have awakened unpleasant susceptibilities; nor did they invoke the name of her who was at the same time their secret and mutual tie. A warm hand-shake, and that was all! From that day, however, a compact existed between the two men, although they had exchanged no signatures and sworn no oath.

Morny's new political faith gradually increased in strength. He now associated with recognized Bonapartists and members of Napoleon's family. On April 11, 1851, he was extremely pleased to be the guest of Lucien Bonaparte, Prince of Canino. On May 16 he dined with Princess Mathilde, in the company of Field-Marshal Exelmans and of Comtesse de Flahaut and de Niewerkerke. Such incidents soon became pleasant habits.

They were followed by closer relations. Louis Napoleon had been chosen as President of the Republic, thanks to false promises and to the stupidity of the nation. This was but the preamble. Morny kept in close touch with him. Though he possessed keen political acumen, he very nearly adopted the wrong course at first, because he had failed to diagnose the inward character of the Prince, who hid it cleverly under a most phlegmatic exterior. He was so lavish in his advice that he gave rise to considerable anxiety in the mind of his brother. He had been too eager to assume authority in the household which had only known him a day, and as a result his advances were met with the polite and frigid reserve which did not betoken weakness or diffidence, as he thought, but was intended to restrain the ardour of his brand-new devotion. He had been too anxious to steer the mind of Napoleon, a man most gentle in appearance, most obstinate in reality, welcoming opinions and advice, but resenting direct pressure, who could be influenced

provided his adviser did not assume to dictate to him the course of action which was predicated. Louis Napoleon took real umbrage at the bustling initiative of Morny. Likewise did he resent as Emperor the excessive fidelity of Persigny, his intemperate zeal, his constant exultations. He did not hesitate to make his resentment known to those around him. Morny also made himself too indispensable at times. The Prince-President often complained of this to Fleury, who undertook to warn Morny of the mistake he had made in trying to assume the supreme direction before he had inspired complete confidence. The future statesman was too keen and too sagacious not to feel that he had committed a serious blunder. Forthwith, he rectified his position, moderated the ardour of his advisory nature, and proceeded to efface himself till such time as he could gain more strength and influence, thanks to political necessities.

Soon afterwards Persigny offered him one day in perfectly clear terms the very part which he wished to play. It was a daring task that he was asked to assume—one for the success of which three qualities were indispensable—courage, initiative, and dignity. He possessed them all. He was asked to use them in the furtherance of an idea which was to be imposed upon the nation as a fact. Success in this would carry its ample reward. He did not hesitate a second between a vague ideal and a palpable reality, between might

and right. He steered towards honours, dignities, and a rapid fortune—that same fortune which he had sought on the risky road of speculation, and which was to come to him ready-made, thanks to a *coup d'état*. Morny was a man of brains and pluck, bereft of all feelings, of all belief, and all principles. The road was clear for such a man.

Others had received definite instructions at the same time — Maupas, Saint - Arnaud, Magnan. Their leader, who occupied the Élysée, had fixed a day with them. The plot was mature. The audacity of the conspirators was increased by the well-known apathy of Parliamentarians, the representatives of the Constitution, who thought it was sufficiently defended, as they had placed it under the protection of immortal principles and of that invisible sentry which Michel de Bourges had seen somewhere in the clouds. The ultra-montane followers of Henry V. and knights of the White Banner were confidently waiting for the sun to ripen their crops and bring about the bloodless victory of the Fleur-de-Lis.

Napoleon III. was a fatalist, and Comte de Chambord left everything to Providence. He decided nothing, never raised a finger, but folded his arms and continued to believe in the justice of God when everything was going against him. The Orleanists could not come to an understanding. The Republicans had committed suicide by rejecting the wise measure insisted upon by the Questors, and known as "Direct Requisition,"

which would have provided the representatives of the nation with a military guard for their defence. A policy of violence was, therefore, bound to win, and the temptation to resort to it was irresistible.

Cœlius wrote to Cicero: "One should always adhere to the honest faction in struggles of an internal nature, so long as they are carried out by legal means, without recourse to arms. But when they culminate in war, the stronger party is the one to turn to. It is then the safer and the better of the two." The argument of Cœlius was adopted by Louis Bonaparte and Morny. We shall soon prove this by relating their deeds.

CHAPTER IV

THE "COUP D'ÉTAT"

The impatience of Morny and the Presidential group—They come to a decision on December 1—Strange circumstances—Description by an eye-witness—Morny, Maxime du Camp, and the Prince-President—The famous evening at the Élysée—How Morny promptly moved from one scene to another—A picture of the conspirators' meeting—De Morny is placed in power at the Home Office—His first enactments—Heated correspondence—The true version of the famous despatches and telegrams—Anecdotes concerning the unforeseen events of the *coup d'état*—The state of Paris and of the provinces on the morrow of this violent act of confiscation—On the threshold of the Empire.

The year 1851 was drawing to a close. The relations between the National Assembly and its President had become more than estranged. The former had elected him unanimously and conferred upon him unlimited powers, which it was now too weak to restrain.

At the very onset of that year the Bonapartist *coup* had been decided in principle. Louis Napoleon and his followers ripened it by renewing the higher ranks of the army and by winning over the commanders of the various army corps. This was effected by affording the Saint-Arnauds and

the Canroberts prompt opportunities for rising to the top of the ladder, thereby becoming the complete masters of the army.* Everything was ready. Even the rank and file seemed anxious to vary the monotony of garrison life by handling their weapons for some reason or another.

On August 11 Morny repaired to Saint-Cloud, and there discussed matters with some of the leaders. In September the Presidential Committee began to wonder if it was not time to set fire to the powder-magazine. This had been seriously discussed by the Prince, Morny, Persigny, Carlier, and Rouher. They decided, however, that it was not yet time to strike. The House was not sitting, and its members were dispersed all over the country. They argued, therefore, that, instead of netting all the representatives of the Liberal and Monarchical Oppositions, they would catch but very small fry. Moreover, they reflected upon the personal influence of their Deputies and their means of propaganda in their respective constituencies. They feared that at the critical moment the agitation might break out in every direction. They therefore thought it wise to wait until the members of the National Assembly had resumed their seats and their speeches. On November 17 Saint-Arnaud, the Minister for War, left the House during a stormy sitting. He winked at Magnan, his brother-officer, and exclaimed : " There is too

* It is said that the Kabyle campaign was fought with no other object than that of making Generals.

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much noise in this House: I am going to call the Guard." He meant what he said, and Napoleon was about to mount his horse. Once more they demurred. The Assembly was defiant. The troops at the disposal of Parliament were sufficiently numerous to protect it against a sudden attack, and were commanded by Lamoricière, Le Flô, Changarnier, Bedeau, Cavaignac, and Charras. They thought it wiser to wait until the storm had blown over, when their task would be easier. They could then seize their opponents in their beds.

The Parliamentary sittings continued amidst trouble and stress. Louis Napoleon cowed the Assembly under a permanent threat, and each day the Assembly was about to indict Louis Napoleon. He spoke seldom, hence his strength. The Assembly spoke often and at great length, hence its weakness. Facts soon justified his action. The dualism created by the Constitution of 1848 between the executive and the legislative powers could only be solved by a shock, but who was to deal the first blow ?*

Conflicting rumours were set afloat. State secrets were whispered thus: "It is settled for to-morrow: the President will sleep at Vincennes"; or "The army is on the side of the national

* This was the subject of conversation at the Élysée receptions. It was a subject of joke and laughter. Donjoy, a Royalist member, said out loud one evening to Cassagnac: "Well, when are you going to show us the door ?" "My dear fellow, I don't exactly know the day, but I hope we shall do so very soon."

representatives"; or "It is high time to do away with this traitor." Another well-informed person would impart the following precious information: "It is all settled for to-morrow. The National Assembly will be dispersed by force, the army is won over to the Prince, and it is high time to gag the garrulous members." So many plots and machinations were laid bare that no one paid the slightest heed to any of them. On the eve of the Cæsarian Revolution political questions were actually eschewed. The earthquake of Salonica, the débuts of an Italian tenor at the Opera, or the recent filibusterings of the famous "Golden Nugget" lottery were much more interesting subjects.

They were not, however, the topic of conversation at the Élysée Palace on Monday, December 1. Interviews and conferences had followed in quick succession during the past few days between the Decembrists, Louis Napoleon, Morny, Saint-Arnaud, Persigny, and Maupas. The President felt that he had no time to lose, as his term of office would expire in five months. Persigny was growing impatient. Maupas only awaited the word of command to send off his letters of convocation to the police-officers of Paris. Morny urged immediate action. Saint-Arnaud repeated with military meekness that France sorely needed a surgical operation. Why hesitate in dealing with these Budget raspers, who were heckling over a miserable sum of three or four millions of francs

(£160,000), which the President required as a yearly increase to his income ? Away with these lawyers, these Parliamentary soldiers, chatterboxes all, whose discussions were a menace to the calm condition of the country! At last the eventful date was settled. The population of Paris was to be surprised during the night between December 1 and 2. The month of December was always a lucky one for the Bonapartists. A glorious December had witnessed both a coronation and Austerlitz, the return of the Emperor's ashes and the election to the presidency of Louis Bonaparte, the exile of yesterday. Once more the Republican *Nivôse*, or month of snows, was to bring luck to "*the nephew of the other.*" By a strange coincidence this same man had sworn fidelity to the Republic in the presence of the National Assembly during the month of December, 1848. He had declared that whoever endeavoured by illegal methods to alter the Constitution of the country would be considered by him as a personal enemy. He had written : "I am not ambitious." Quite recently, and upon his own motion, the courts had inflicted a severe punishment on a comic paper which had portrayed him in the act of tearing the Constitution to shreds. He asserted as a lasting principle that France was not the apanage of an individual, of a family, or of a party.*

* This formula had apparently been drawn up for a warning to others. There were rivals who could not be ignored, un-

No citizen would be a greater slave than himself to the interests of the nation. Words must change their meaning according to events. He was compelled to alter his language when he came into power. The conscience of a cold, concentrated, and energetic man is not troubled, however, by oaths of allegiance sworn publicly or by professions of faith frequently reiterated. Such passing formalities were no more needed once he could speak as a master, and he soon ignored the promises sworn in 1848 before God and man. These were all questions of circumstance. Even Persigny had flirted with Republicanism, for on the morrow of 1848 the following sentence occurred in his election address: "I am frankly and sincerely a Republican." All this had become very ancient history.

Morny, Mérimée, and others, spoke of the Deputies as virtuous fools. They repeated to

crowned would-be saviours, but Pretenders all, belonging to two distinct branches of the Monarchy. Innumerable saviours tended their aid, and offered to rescue France from the revolutionary abyss. "I am the indispensable pilot," wrote Comte de Chambord, "the only one who can steer the ship into port, because it is my sacred mission to do so." In truth, all these Pretenders were either deceivers or deceived. The excellent Louis-Philippe himself had twice broken his word through his greed for royal honours. On July 30, 1830, Charles X. sent him from Saint-Cloud to Paris. A huge crowd greeted him at the Palais Royal, and shouted, "Long live Louis-Philippe!" He seemed indignant, and warmly protested in the following terms, which were never forgotten by the Duc de Mortemart: "They may tear me to pieces, but they will never make me accept the crown" ("Memoirs of Comte de Rouge," by the Marquis de Verac).

them that there was no real danger ahead, that they were wrong in suspecting the President, who quite recently had affirmed his intention to remain faithful to the honourable compact which he had signed.* Speakers had denounced the forthcoming signs of a conspiracy, notwithstanding the strange insistence on the part of the extreme left to close its eyes to all danger.† Formal warnings had been received from different sources. It was useless, however, to keep isolated sentries without the concourse of heavy battalions. More than once men had been noticed hovering about the Élysée, peering into the gardens and the courtyards of the palace, gazing up at its windows, and trying to recognize the flitting shadows behind the blinds.

Maxime du Camp noted some curious features of the Imperialist conjuration.

He knew Comte de Morny, who was aware that he was a political adversary. They had artistic tastes in common, and their friendship was not hampered by political considerations. Du Camp had travelled much in Egypt, Syria, Nubia, and Palestine, and had collected numerous photographs of the scenes and monuments he had beheld

* Message of November 12, 1850.

† The following is an extract from the *Siècle*, October 15, 1851 : "We wonder how some people can be simple enough to believe in the possibility of a *coup d'état*. Is it credible that in these times a man, whosoever he may be, could attempt to mould and fashion a great nation as if it were made of putty ? How could he, by his mere signature, transform the destinies of 35,000,000 of people in twenty-four hours ?"

under the bright Eastern sun. He was the first to photograph the tottering temples on the banks of the Nile, the various aspects of Jerusalem, and the ruins of Baalbek. Morny wished to present the whole collection to the Prince-President, for he felt sure that he would fully appreciate its value, though he was about to play for such heavy stakes. He asked the author of "Souvenirs d'Orient" to meet him at his house, 17, Avenue des Champs-Élysées, on the evening of November 26, and to go on with him to the Presidency. After spending some time with De Morny's guests, among whom were General de Flahaut, Paul Daru, and Fernand de Montguyon, they repaired to the presidential palace. Maxime du Camp was ushered into the presence of Louis Napoleon, and introduced to him by Morny. The Prince-President was, as usual, placid, and received the visitor most affably. He struck him as a man quite free from worry or anxiety, as the head of a State the mechanism of which was in perfect and permanent working order. It was this very cool and calm demeanour of Napoleon that threw so many people off their guard. While he spoke with the man of letters, he might have been thinking of his contemplated work on Julius Cæsar. He leant much stress upon the traces which the conqueror of Pharsales had left in Egypt. As he took leave of his guest he said: "I am at home every day, and I hope to see you soon." At that time he had come to the grave decision which was only

known to the few who were to be the principal actors in the drama and his confidants. On the following Friday several distinguished guests were dining at De Morny's. Among them were Prosper Mérimée, Victor Cousin, Viollet-le-duc, General de Flahaut, and Maxime du Camp. Remembering the invitation tendered to the latter by the Prince, Morny said to him: "Are you going to the Élysée on Monday?" and as his friend seemed to hesitate, he added: "I advise you to do so, because I have reason to think that you will witness some very interesting events there."

The following Monday was December 1, and Maxime du Camp was able to observe some striking peculiarities on the ground-floor salons of the Palace. Very few had foregathered there. The prudent friends of the morrow had remained away, but there were more officers present than usual. They were all quartered in Paris, and were summoned one by one to the presence of the President. Louis Napoleon received his guests standing, with his head slightly bent forward and his impenetrable expression of every day. His longest interview was that with Colonel Vieyra, head of the staff of the National Guard, a man with a most energetic expression. Those present noticed that as he came forward to salute the President, Louis Bonaparte went to meet him, and, button-holing him in a familiar way, he spoke to him in a low tone for fully twenty minutes. What could have been the gist of this mysterious conversation?

The incident was noticed by the Marquis de Turgot, Foreign Secretary, who said laughingly to his neighbour: "Vieyra looks as if he were the bearer of a State secret." He little knew how true were his words. Louis Bonaparte had just whispered to the Colonel: "It must be done to-night." As soon as the officer had left, Baron Haeckeren tried to sound Napoleon upon his intentions. He had promised him the help of the monarchist reactionaries on certain conditions, and all he wanted to obtain was a formal undertaking on the part of the President.

"Well, I will answer you to-morrow," was the reply. Future events provided the answer complete, irrevocable.

Morny did not attend the reception. He thought it wiser or more elegant not to fray with the President's guests, and he attended a first night instead. It was the first performance at the Opera Comique of "Bluebeard's Castle." Society, literature, and the Press had foregathered there. Beautiful women offered their bared necks and satin shoulders to the caresses of the dazzling lights. The stall-holders gazed from the stage to the auditorium, and thence to the stage, not knowing which of the two was the worthier of their attention. Those present were known to all, but among them Morny attracted most attention, though he had not yet achieved that notoriety which was to be his in the near future. Seated in a stage-box, he acknowledged the smiles and bows

of his numerous friends. He had just left the box of Madame de Liadières, in which some remark of his had excited great hilarity. There were several Orleanist deputies in her box, and everyone seemed more interested in politics than in the play. "We will send you to Vincennes within the next few days," said one of the Orleanists to the friend of his hostess. De Morny smiled, kissed her hand, and returned to his box. Judging by appearances, he seemed to have thrown off all cares of State, for he gazed steadily through his binoculars at a handsome girl, who seemed anxious to attract his attention and that of many others.

During the interval he flitted from box to box, from stall to stall. He met General Cavaignac, stiff and austere as usual, and General Lamoricière. He knew that he should have both of them arrested within a few hours. A great many field-officers had visited the theatre that night. Among them was General d'Allonville, who commanded the Cavalry Brigade at Versailles. "Return immediately to Versailles," he whispered to the General, "for your presence there may be soon needed." "What is the matter? Why should I return?" "Oh, nothing; I give you this advice for your own sake. I have heard rumours of an impending Socialist demonstration."

He spoke to a number of officers. One of them, Baron de Lamerville, asked him for tickets for the next day's sitting, and he replied: "Come to me, and I will see that you are admitted, for I can

assure you it will be worth your while to attend Parliament to-morrow." As soon as the interval was over, Morny left the opera. At the conclusion of the play the crowd dispersed quickly, while critics, writers, and other habitués of the boulevards strolled along exchanging views and impressions. Everything seemed normal in the life of Paris. Cabs rolled by conveying their fares to the brilliant restaurants, while pedestrians smoked their cigars and hummed the latest arias. Not a soldier, not a policeman, in sight. Paris was about to enjoy the slumber of innocence. Little wonder that Louis de Cormenin felt surprised when his companion said to him, on parting at the Café de la Paix: "I warn you, my dear friend, that shots will be fired to-morrow in the streets of Paris, and that blood will flow freely."

The reception at the Élysée was neither brilliant nor animated. All the guests seemed anxious to get home. At ten o'clock Maupas and Saint-Arnaud ostensibly departed by the front-door, but returned forthwith by a private entrance under the porch, and repaired to the President's study. There they found the inevitable Persigny, Mocquart, the private secretary, and Lieutenant-Colonel de Béville, Military Equerry to the President. They conversed in low tones while awaiting final instructions. Napoleon did not keep them waiting long. He soon joined them, accompanied by Morny. "Nothing is suspected," he said, as he sat at his table. He opened a secret drawer, from which he

took an envelope bearing the symbolic word "Rubicon," and containing the State documents of the *coup d'état.* He signed them, and gave to each one his definite orders for the present and the future. These documents consisted of a decree dissolving Parliament, and placing the whole department of the Seine in a state of siege, of the proclamation of the War Minister to the French Army, of that of the Prefect of Police to the population of Paris, and also the appointment of De Morny to the Home Office. But all was not settled between the conspirators. Generals Saint-Arnaud and Magnan were quite decided to take Republican Paris by storm, but wishing to leave nothing to chance, they requested that their orders should be duplicated. As a result, the principal actor in the drama signed, initialed, and duplicated everything that was exacted of him. Then came the final formality, the counter signature of a responsible and a civilian Minister. As Minister for War, Saint-Arnaud did not think it possible to write out orders to himself; moreover, he wished to safeguard the appearances of that very legality which he was about to violate. Morny quickly realized what should be done. He came over to the table upon which the fateful document lay, and signed it without removing his glove. He thus put his name to the death-sentence of Parliament. Deeds must now succeed to words. Lieutenant de Béville took away the manuscripts which were to be printed that night at the National Printing

Office. The actors of the *coup d'état* remained silent for a few minutes before taking leave of their master. He was more silent, more frigid than ever. Maupas seemed weighed down with anxiety, while Saint-Arnaud assumed that air of daring which becomes a General in action. Morny seemed nervous, although he had promised nothing, sworn nothing, and signed nothing. "Gentlemen," he said, "you all understand that we are playing with our lives." Old Mocquart, who was not expected to risk much in the carrying out of the conspiracy, replied: "No doubt we may lose our skins at this game, but mine is so wrinkled that I am not risking very much." Persigny seemed quite happy, for since he had become a conspirator he was in his element. Napoleon at last addressed his followers: "I have every confidence in our success; I am wearing my mother's ring, upon which is inscribed the word 'Hope.'" Hands clasped hands, and each man went to do his duty.

The bridges were intercepted as soon as the conspirators had crossed them, so they proceeded with the comforting knowledge that they ran very few risks, as the army was won over to their cause. Saint-Arnaud and General Magnan were instructed to mass an imposing number of troops, who were to terrorize Paris for some days. The zealous Maupas, a very young Prefect of Police, had to sign the orders to arrest Deputies and Generals who were considered to be the military glories of

France. Previous to this Persigny had been sent to confer with Colonel Espinasse, the military Commandant of the Chamber of Deputies, who was to occupy it with troops. Lieutenant-Colonel Edgar Ney and Major de Toulongeon had to control the movements and the dispositions of several regiments. Colonel de Fleury was entrusted with a similar task. In the meantime De Morny decided that he himself would dismiss Thorigny, the Home Secretary. He proceeded to do so at a quarter past seven in the morning, an hour later than had been arranged. The courtyard of the Ministry was full of soldiers. Thorigny was awakened by the clatter of arms, and was horrified, on looking out, by the imposing display of troops which had invaded his residence without his orders. He telegraphed as follows: "What is the matter? My Ministry is occupied by troops." To which Maupas replied: "Monsieur de Morny will soon tell you what is the matter." A few minutes later De Morny appeared on the scene, followed by two secretaries, Leopold Lehon and Achille Boucher. His manner was courteous, though somewhat derisive, as he informed the Minister of his dismissal, and requested him to hand him the seals of office. Poor Thorigny, who three months previously had staked his honour upon the constitutional loyalty of Louis Bonaparte, was utterly dismayed. He was asked to finish his toilette as quickly as possible, and was gently pushed out of the room. At 7.30 the Palace of the Place

Beauvau was vacated by an unshaven man, who perspired profusely, notwithstanding the cold. No one noticed his departure, so great was the feverish excitement which prevailed in the confusion caused by the gallop of horses, and by the movements of numberless police-officers of all ranks. The unheeded man was Thorigny, the Minister who had resigned by force. His successor was already master of the situation, and forthwith ordered the evacuation of the Palace, of the National Assembly, and the closing of the Conseil d'État. These orders came in quick succession to the Prefecture of Police. As soon as the machinery of war was put into motion against the republican institutions, Morny tried to dispense with the help of Maupas. He wished to replace him at the Prefecture by Carlier, who was much more supple and pliable. He had won over the President to his way of thinking, for the President's confidence with his fellow-man always hung upon a thread. The battle was begun when the Prince said to Fleury : " Take charge of the Prefecture of Police ; you and I and Saint-Arnaud will soon finish this job." Fleury, however, had no desire to play the part of a *Rovigo*. He answered that Maupas was the man intended for the post for which he was eminently fitted, that there must have been some misunderstanding between him and the President owing to a telegraphic error, and that it was wiser to leave him where he was. Morny had to submit, and to transmit his orders to a Prefect

LE DUC DE MORNY

A. Doumenc

of Police, who was compelled to execute them, though he felt little pleasure in doing so. The Minister first decided to behead the Opposition by depriving it of its leaders. His instructions to this effect were clear and precise. They were carried out to the letter by the Prefect and his subordinates.

Questors, Deputies, Generals, numbering twenty in all, were arrested in their homes. Those whom Morny wished to treat with kindness were sent to the Cavalry Barracks on the Quai d'Orsay, where Colonel Feray commanded the 7th Lancers. Their names were Berryer, Dufaure, Odilon, Barrot, and the Duc de Broglie. The others were sent at nightfall to Mazas, Vincennes, and to Mont-Valérien. Among them was General de Lamoricière. The previous day he had been discussing events which in his opinion pointed to an imminent outburst. The legitimate affairs of the Assembly, and the urgent necessity to put a brake upon the intrigues of the Pretender, were discussed at this private gathering.

"If necessary," said Lamoricière, "he must be sent to Mazas."

"And what if he forestalls you? Supposing he tried a *coup d'état?*"

"That would be impossible. The army would not follow him, and I should only have to show myself in order to quell any such attempt on his part."

"But supposing he effected his purpose in the

dead of the night, and supposing he had the representatives of the people arrested in their own beds ?"

" In such a case," replied the General, " I have always two pistols at the head of my bed, and I should smash the head of anyone who dared to break into my house."

" Oh," said the Comtesse de Pitray, his cousin, " it would indeed be a beautiful death for a Lamoricière to be murdered by policemen ! I sincerely hope you will never run the risk of dying in such a vulgar manner."

Six or seven hours after his conversation two detectives, led by Blanchet, the police-officer, entered No. 11, Rue Las-Cases in the dead of night. They reached Lamoricière's bedroom before he was aware of their presence. He was surprised in his sleep, as General Bedeau had been, and protested in the following words :

" Gentlemen, you are committing an illegal act."

" How so, since this is the *coup d'état ?*" was the ingenuous reply.

Lamoricière offered no resistance, but left his revolvers under his pillow, and followed the detectives. Thiers was more surprised than anyone that night when he received the visit of the Minister's special Envoys. The Minister was none other than his friend Morny, who had recently been complimented by him upon his Orleanist tendencies. General Changarnier was also dumbfounded. A most energetic man on the battle-

field, feared on account of the great influence which he wielded in the army, he was ever hesitant in political matters, and always missed the chance of turning events to his advantage. Changarnier and Morny had long known each other. They had first met under rather peculiar circumstances at Sig Camp in Africa. As young Morny lay there one day in high fever upon the banks of the river, an officer whom he did not even know by sight came up to him and said:

"Monsieur de Morny, you are very feverish. Allow me to give you this orange."

"Many thanks. I accept it gratefully, for my throat is parched. To whom do I owe this kindness?"

"To Major Changarnier."

They had since met at the Palais-Bourbon. Although they did not sit on the same side of the House, they had almost worked together in a certain scheme which Adolphe Thiers had also fostered. Morny related this incident after 1852, and in his manuscript notes upon the *coup d'état.* Thiers, Changarnier, and Morny had formed an occult triumvirate to decide what measures should be taken and what people should be arrested. They were unanimous about the dissolution of the "Constituante," but they disagreed as to whom they should arrest. Thiers did not wish to include Cavaignac or Lamoricière among the prisoners. He thought that the *coup* would be imperilled, owing to the popularity of these Generals. Chan-

garnier, on the other hand, contended that they must be secured, that their popularity mattered little, the more so as it was doubtful—at least, in the case of Cavaignac—and that he himself would make bold to arrest them. As a result of all this, nothing was done. In virtue of his right, which was his might, Morny decided to arrest Thiers, Changarnier, Cavaignac, and Lamoricière.

He was too indifferent by nature ever to yield to temper or to personal animosity, and he only resorted to these measures as temporary necessities. His instructions were that the most courteous manners should temper as far as possible the roughness of the proceedings. He saw that awkward witnesses were kept aloof, and proceeded to do what he thought was his duty—to put away for a while all those who were likely to protest. He did not forget, however, that many of those whom he was arresting by force might become useful allies after his victory. For this reason he was ready to extend to them a hand of friendship as soon as matters were settled, and to treat them as if nothing unpleasant had ever happened. He also had the good taste not to indulge in unnecessary hardships towards the negligible quantities. Some of these were platonic lovers of pure idealism, and had offered themselves up in sacrifice. They would not have minded if they had been treated somewhat harshly, if they had had to suffer for the sacred cause of liberty. Such victims, however, were not wanted. They did not

receive the coveted halo. Some of them had been pounced upon during the night, and hurried off to Mazas. Morny ordered that they should be released early the next morning. They had to dress hurriedly, vacate their cells, and drive away accompanied by a polite official. The vehicle, a somewhat rough one, was driven towards the Vincennes Gate. The prisoners exchanged proud and resigned looks, and wondered what their fate would be. They knew that several of the representatives who had been arrested—Royalists like Léon de Laborde—had been thrust into a dungeon. But when the carriage had got beyond the Barrière du Trône the horses stopped, the police-officer alighted, saluted, and walked away. Having waited a few minutes, the driver of the hideous prison-van also alighted.

"Gentlemen," he said, standing cap in hand, "you can alight when you please."

They were free men! Several of them protested loudly, and refused their freedom. Frederic Béchard clamoured to be sent back to gaol. The place was deserted ; not a soul could hear their indignant protests, which were lost in the fog. There was not a policeman within sight whose presence could be construed or invoked as a threat or an act of violence. They had to return home on foot, bespattered with mud, and submit to the contemptuous indifference of their persecutors.

In the meantime, important matters were being shaped and solved. The subordinates of Monsieur

de Maupas displayed wonderful zeal and celerity. They would have done more had it been possible. The Prefecture of Police only regretted that its staff could not effect more than eighty arrests at a time. The authorities might easily have been satisfied, for all the obstacles seemed to totter to the ground under the Bonapartists' blows. It was still the habit to ring the curfew-bell when a public catastrophe or a violent crisis ensued. The people shuddered with anguish on hearing the hurried, spasmodic peals. Even this consolation was denied to the leaders of the Opposition. They were unable to create a panic in the slumbering city. Colonel Vieyra, the new Commander of the National Guard, had had every drum stove in, so that the troops and population should not be summoned. On the night of the *coup d'état* orders had likewise been given to occupy every belfry, and all the bell-ropes were cut on the evening of December 1. In a few hours the Prince had got rid of his chief adversaries. The Prefect of Police, filled with joy, telegraphed to him as follows: "We have triumphed all along the line." Then followed mutual congratulations upon the happy turn of events, thanks to the all-powerful help of those agents of conviction called rifles and cannons. The reception-rooms of the Élysée were full of people eager to show themselves, to make themselves known.

There was, however, one last alert. December the 4th proved more arduous than the preceding

days. Barricades had been thrown up in the streets of Paris, and Morny was the recipient of conflicting information concerning the means and resources of the defenders of the Constitution, as they were described, on the other side of the barricades. He had had to leave his Ministry in order to confer with the President-Dictator. Troops were pushed forward. Batteries of gendarmes were mobilized, as a popular resistance was feared. Blood was sure to flow, so thought Louis Napoleon and Maupas. They were in consequence full of hesitation, and the conspirators around them were losing confidence. Morny alone preserved his gaiety and self-confidence.

"Why, gentlemen, yesterday you were clamouring for barricades, and now that you have got them you are not satisfied!"

Maupas was in a state of constant trepidation, and though later, when sitting by the fireside, he often asserted that he was perfectly cool throughout the whole affair, he was certainly suffering from fever when transmitting to the Home Office a mass of conflicting rumours overheard in the street. Morny, with his usual good-humour, dealt with them upon their merits.

At times, however, he was somewhat influenced by the fears of the Prefect of Police. He then grew impatient, and dashed off hurried instructions. Maupas, who resented the authority of Morny, sent hesitant and anxious replies. The result of this was a certain amount of historical

confusion, and a sort of legend grew up around the despatches exchanged between the Home Secretary and his First-Lieutenant. Later on Dr. Véron, a friend of Morny, stated that the following messages and replies were exchanged between the two chief agents of the *coup d'état*. We opine that the Doctor must have carefully prepared this version with the hero of our book.

"MAUPAS. They say the 12th Regiment of Dragoons has arrived from Saint-Germain, and that Comte de Chambord is in its ranks. I can hardly believe it.

"MORNY. And I do not believe it.

"MAUPAS. A huge crowd had gathered on the Pont-Neuf; shots have been fired on the Quai aux Fleurs; there are compact masses around the Prefecture of Police. They are firing through a railing. What is to be done?

"MORNY. Shoot through your railing.

"MAUPAS. We require at least two guns to keep the assailants at bay.

"MORNY. Go to bed."

What became of the originals of these despatches? Maupas, as a matter of fact, gave the lie to the version we have just reproduced by suing the papers which had published it, and by complaining bitterly in his "Souvenirs" of the somewhat subordinate part with which he had been credited in the December drama. The phrases "Fire through the railings" and "Go to bed"

were jokes which, if written or spoken during the storm, would have had the same effect as a dash of gaudy colour upon a dark background. The truth is that these phrases were never telegraphed.*

Notwithstanding the secret rivalry between the Minister and the Prefect, the memorable *coup de main* was eminently successful. Its result was never doubtful for a moment, because strength, numbers, and the whole army were on the one side. The resistance in Paris had been short, and the last convulsions of the struggle were over.† Soldiers returned to their barracks. A new Consulate, which was to assume on the following day all the rights and privileges of absolute sovereignty,

* We have discovered among the archives of the Ministry of Justice an original despatch of Maupas to the President of the Republic (December 18, 1851) :

"*From the Prefecture of Police.*

"The second municipal district is in our hands, together with its representatives. Your police-officers displayed wonderful courage. A hundred representatives are prisoners in the barracks of the Quai d'Orsay. This is an enormous advantage.

(Signed) "*The Prefect of Police*, MAUPAS.

"P.S.—Messieurs Berryer and Fallouxare at Mazas. This is harsh treatment, I know, but I only proceed by strength. We shall be masters of the situation. To-night we attack the barricades. Cannons and pluck, that is all we need. (To the Prince-President of the Republic.)"

† The only real struggle was the bloody conflict on the Boulevard Bonne-Nouvelle. It was the result of a tragic misunderstanding, for the shots were fired before the word of command was given, owing to the wild frenzy of the troops. This insane fusillade only lasted a quarter of an hour. It caused many victims, and the following day the footpaths were stained with blood and strewn with corpses (Victor Pierre, "History of the Revolution of 1848").

had established itself upon the ruins of the barricades. The camps of Saint-Arnaud, Magnan, and Fleury re-echoed loud with exclamations of joy. Glory to the God of armies, Who had reduced these wretched Revolutionists to nothing! At the Élysée and at the Ministry of the Interior more reserve was maintained. Louis Napoleon owed it to his dignity to preserve that apparent coolness amidst the joys of triumph which he had shown in the days of dire distress. Morny followed his example, and wore the placid air of a conqueror who had never apprehended defeat. Under the windows of his mansion the life of Paris flowed past calmly and ponderously. The Minister of the Interior telegraphed messages of peace to every district in France. He had sent to each Prefect a summary of the decrees and proclamations of the President of the Republic. The authorities had almost to a man afforded a proof of their brand-new loyalty in their anxiety to uphold those who could maintain them in their positions. They had not thought twice about siding with the conquerors against the conquered, or defenders of a weak and undisciplined Constitution which had received its death-blow, and could not be brought to life again by the clamourings of its adherents.

The provinces witnessed a number of conflicts in the east, north, and the south. Some of these were immediately suppressed, while others produced tremendous excitement and serious disorders. In many districts the events of

December 2 were looked upon as a public catastrophe. The curfew was tolled in the church belfries and bands scoured the country, while insurrections broke out in many towns in which democratic ideas prevailed. The Home Office was constantly informed of these unfortunate risings, caused by the fermentation of turbulent and disorderly instincts more than by the rousing of Liberal consciences. At Montargis and at Clamecy very serious excesses were committed, and encounters between the troops and the people became deadly conflicts. A state of siege was declared in several counties. Morny sent definite and prompt instructions. A heavy hand struck the guilty ones, and also the suspects. These risings, however, were isolated. They had no cohesion, no leader, and as a result the rebels had to lay down their arms and resume a life of peace and hard work. Louis Napoleon knew the magic power of grand eloquence, and at the proper time he asked for and obtained a general amnesty. Politicians and clergymen soon declared unanimously that the act of confiscation which had just been perpetrated was unavoidable, and necessary for the preservation of power when its authority had been threatened. Napoleon spoke lofty words of peace, justice, and humanity, which evoked the admiration of the people. This régime, founded upon such faulty bases, was destined to last eighteen years, and to provide France with wealth, properity, and undeniable greatnesss.

CHAPTER V

A MINISTER'S DAILY ROUTINE

After the crisis—A political change makes many converts—Morny and his establishment in the Place Beauvau—His first enactments—An interesting study of a Minister's daily routine—A glance at a post-bag—Reports from the Attorney-General upon the "avowed enemies" of law and order—The wonderful zeal displayed by the police is followed by strict sentences—Some other unpublished documents—Petitions and requests—The race for preferment—Officials and journalists—Some striking proofs of the precarious condition of journalism—Its castigations come to a sudden end—Ministerial correspondence concerning press men and matters—Some details concerning the conditions imposed upon journals and journalists under the tutorship of the authorities—The Minister authorizes the publication of literary organs, but allows very few political sheets to come into existence — *The Nightcap*, *Olympus*, *Love*, and other publications—A few flowers in the archives of the secret Palace—The special *dossier* of De Villemessant—Morny's part in all these transactions—He shows himself indifferent to petty quibbles and minor matters, bringing his mind to bear upon the solution of grave problems—His efforts are suddenly thwarted by the decree of confiscation of the Orleans properties—His resignation is accepted—The real causes of this resignation—Secret antagonism between the Prince-President and Morny—An opportune pretext enables him to retire at the right moment.

THE decisive blow had been struck. Morny was studying its consequences, which he had correctly

diagnosed. Persigny boasted far and wide that events had justified his unswerving confidence in the eventual return of the Napoleonic star. Maupas, who had mastered his emotions, had extolled the prowess of the police administration. Saint-Arnaud praised and absolved the army. In the midst of his councillors, Louis Napoleon alone maintained an anxious demeanour. His sensitive heart was pained as he thought of the fate of the victims whose death had been caused by a fatal error. He expressed his sorrow the very first day he met those who had perpetrated the act of violence. Whereupon Morny interrupted him in the following terms :

" Monseigneur, in civil wars party leaders are not forbidden to wear kid gloves, but when necessity arises these gloves do not prevent them from staining their hands in blood, even if some of it should get under their nails." Saint-Just the cynic could not have coined a better phrase. In due course Napoleon's vacillation ceased, thanks to acquired habits and to the general amnesty which had been proclaimed.

Success covers every act.* The Prince-President, who was to be an Emperor, and Morny his Minister, soon had a proof of this. But a few years previously the courtiers and followers of the exiled Prince might have been reckoned on the

* So said Cardinal de Retz, the Prince of Intrigue : " Success justifies and consecrates everything that is lofty and daring."

fingers of one hand. Now a legion of upstarts is at his heels, a rear-guard of such intriguers as follows in the wake of all revolutions and wait till the strife is over to join the escort of the conqueror.

Adhesions, or rather submissions, poured in from all sides.*

In consequence, the ranks of the Monarchists were sensibly thinned. There were revulsions of conscience which caused great surprise.† Resistance grew sensibly weaker among so-called Legitimists, while "the incorruptible ones" sulked and held aloof without the slightest use. The masses had accepted the accomplished fact without much trouble. The country had reached the dawn of an era of peace and prosperity, and this conviction was foremost in the minds of the public. The rest was a matter that could easily be arranged. Napoleon and liberty, the Republic and the Empire, the Revolution ever giving birth to new men, and the hereditary dictatorship which had come back on the

* "Behold a crowd fired with love and devotion. It is the same crowd that gathered under the balcony of Louis XVIII., crying, 'Long live the Bourbons!' The same crowd christened Charles X. the kingly Knight, Louis-Philippe 'the citizen King,' and hailed the republic in 1848. Forward, good Lords; hurry up, and try to get a bone to pick" (Viel-Castel's "Memoirs," January 1, 1852).

† Had not the *coup d'état* been effected by the Emperor's nephew in the name of Liberty and the "Sovereignty of the Nation"? "Napoleon personifies the Republic of the people" was a sentence which had been spoken and never contradicted.

THE PRINCESS DE SAGAN

ebb-tide of democracy,* were questions which became co-ordinated, and were made one by public opinion, though they were diametrically opposed.

Quite recently there had existed a Legislative Assembly, a Constitution, a Law of May 31, a Legitimist party, and an Orleanist party. To-day these institutions were all antiquated and but vaguely remembered. The Opposition circles had been dispersed like chaff before the wind, and those who belonged to them were utterly dismayed. Each man blamed his neighbour for what had occurred, though one and all had been hoodwinked and blindfolded thrice over. A famous meeting of Legitimists foregathered in a well-known Royalist salon, and those present formed two groups. The one stood round General Changarnier, the man who was always about to act, and the other round Duvergier de Hauranne, who, with many of his colleagues in the Legislative Assembly, had had the honour of being led to Mazas Prison on December 2. The recent *coup d'état* was the subject of conversation, and the following question was put to Changarnier: "Why did you not take steps to save the situation before it was too late? When you knew his plans, why did you not arrest the President?"

* On the day the Senate reinstated the Empire a well-known Monarchist said to Berryer: "We have just made the bed of Henry V.;" to which the famous orator replied: "Well, in any case you will not lack *paillasses*" (*paillasse* in French means a mattress, and also a clown or turncoat).

"I had not the support of the Chambers, who did not dare to act."

As he spoke he pointed to Duvergier de Hauranne, who had just answered a similar question, saying, as he looked towards Changarnier: "We were helpless in the matter, because *they* did not dare to move."

The two phrases were spoken at the same time, to the intense amusement of those present.

The sons of Queen Hortense had been well served by circumstances. The one could hear the neighing of the horses that were about to take him from the Élysée to the Tuileries. The other, His Excellency Count de Morny, could begin to lead a life of luxury whenever he deemed fit. Official proclamations announced the fact that peace had come to France for ever and a day. The last revolution had been effected, and those whom it had placed in power considered themselves strong enough to prevent the occurrence of another one. The new Government found that governing was quite an easy task. Willy-nilly, journals and journalists had decreased in numbers and sensibly lowered their tone. The Parliamentary Tribune had been done away with as a cumbersome piece of furniture. "Take that away," was the order given by the President of the Republic, as he touched it with his stick. Another day, on January 18, he walked across the deserted semicircle. The night was falling fast upon the ruins

of the famous hall, and by some strange illusion he seemed to hear the echo of a pledge. Wishing, no doubt, to dispel the impression produced, he ordered the removal of the disjointed planks of the Tribune and of a whole row of seats.

Many eloquent men who could not have been compelled to remain silent had fled into exile. "Of the howlers of the National Assembly," as they were amiably christened by the Duchesse de Dino, "nothing was left but voiceless and inconsistent shadows." Political France was like a sick-room, because there people spoke in whispers. The general health did not seem to suffer, for the activity of the country was directed once more to business and to work.

On the top rungs of the ladder the sharing of the spoils was almost settled. The best positions were already conferred upon their permanent holders. There were subsequently some exchanges of favours and mutations of preferments, but all those exchanges were effected in the charmed circle of the privileged ones. The political avenues were closed for some time to such hungry ambitions as had not been provided for on the spur of the moment.

The Cabinet had practically been formed on December 2. On the 3rd and 4th, in the throes of the battle, there had been little time for administrative work, and the Cabinet met permanently at the residence of Count de Morny. Thus all orders and instructions were despatched from the Home Office.

As soon as the crisis was over there was a division of responsibilities. Morny remained at his post without hesitating. During his short time of office he displayed a considerable amount of energy, while preserving a very calm demeanour. He organized the different services, brought the Prefecture of Police into quicker and closer contact with his own department, and stimulated the zeal of newly-appointed officials whose task it was to " purify " the political atmosphere by a system of exclusion. Thanks to this, he dispensed with the services of all weak or doubtful servants. He dictated circulars and reports, and displayed no surprise at the stroke of luck which had made him the supreme chief of a subservient staff of Prefects, Sub-Prefects, and General Secretaries. He was neither intoxicated nor dazzled by his ascent to the Capitole. The Press flocked to his door; as well as yesterday's officials, now the candidates of morrow; friends and advisers who also were soliciting favours. Bonapartists had suddenly sprung from everywhere. Many others besides came to beg audiences. All eyes were fixed upon him. He was too strong a man to yield to that vertigo which overcomes the weak. The sensation of power was only skin-deep in him. Amid his surroundings there were many who thought that what he had achieved by daring and by intelligence was merely due to chance. Maupas, who was anxious to succeed to him, was wont to say, " The fumes of success will overcome him,"

while Persigny remarked that "his brilliant wit will cause his downfall." The same could not have been said of Persigny. That he had succeeded in becoming the second in command was a fact that none could deny. He did not enjoy power for very long, for he soon had to recall to mind what Napoleon had said to Bourrienne as he entered the Tuileries: "Now that we have got here, Bourrienne, we have got to stay here." In the meanwhile he was quite satisfied with the present condition of things, and full of hope for the future. He administered, governed, and divided his time to the best of his ability between the duties of his rank and those of his exalted position.

The daily duties of a Minister in the early days of 1852, and during Morny's tenure of office until the beginning of the autocratic Empire, afford a curious page of history which is interesting to recall. They underwent a change, of course, when Parliament lost all control over public affairs, when the Press was stripped of its influence, when autocracy took the place of liberty. It is therefore interesting to describe hour by hour the occupations of a member of the Cabinet. With this object we shall bring to light the manuscripts and documents which we have unearthed from amid the dust that has covered them during the past sixty years.

His Excellency the Minister of the Interior has risen early. With a light step he has reached the white and gold drawing-room, the seat of his

Empire. Large official logs are burning in the chimney. He is keen for work. The Cabinet does not meet to-day, nor has he to grant audiences. Luckily, in the new condition of things there are no more Parliamentary sittings, no more talkative, inquisitive assemblies needing explanations or justifications. All is well. The Secretary of State has time to reflect and ponder, and he is going to put it to good use.

He is full of energy, and means to study the reports upon his table, and to master every detail of the service. His secretaries and attachés have classified and tabulated the documents for his perusal. A vast accumulation of papers has to be dealt with. Morny's temperament rebels against this bureaucratic farrago, which pleased such men as Billault and Persigny. His personal letters first claim his attention. They have been opened by a subordinate, and marked in red and blue pencil. Those marked in blue are to be read by him, and those in red to be consigned to the waste-paper basket. Then follow Press cuttings, which are contained in white or yellow covers according to their political importance. The heaviest correspondence consists of police reports.

The second Napoleonic dictatorship had just been born, and the Police Investigation Department exceeded all instructions by affecting numerous and promiscuous arrests. Twenty-six thousand suspects were placed under lock and key within a few days.

These arrests were all justified by the Minister of Justice in a lengthy report appended to the Monthly Notes furnished by the Solicitor-General upon the political situation in Paris and in the provinces.

These memoranda are most instructive, and enable us to form an accurate opinion of the true state of public conscience at the time. The high officials, armed with imposing mandates, were like the great inquisitors of bygone days, for they invested political suspicion with the pitiless formalities of a religious inquisition. They peered into the deepest recesses of every social class, and dived into socialistic and other mysterious depths. Having done so, they brought to the surface those elements which they deemed to be sources of public danger.

The exordium was most benign.

The doings and sayings of the ruling powers were extolled by the Solicitor-General, but he himself soon changed his mode of action, and became indulgent towards those guilty of turbulence or of opposition. Yet he relentlessly pursued the members of all secret societies.*

The general symptoms of the political situation were most reassuring, and the improvement was maintained throughout France. Confidence was restored, party hatreds were no more expressed, while jealousy and greed were things of the past.

* It is only fair to state that most of those arrested were soon released, though some prisoners were exiled to Cayenne and to Lambessa.

The trees of liberty were cut down in every borough, and the words "Liberty, equality, fraternity" erased from every public monument. The two acts were accomplished simultaneously, without attracting public attention.

This fact is interesting, for it shows how short-lived are popular fashions when we remember that the Republic still existed a few days before these acts were perpetrated. The Home Secretary was naturally delighted to learn that in such districts as those of the Seine-et-Marne and the Yonne the trees of liberty had been uprooted by the very hands which had recently planted them in Republican soil. The Solicitor-General had but one regret with regard to the removal of the democratic insignia. He had been compelled to take cognizance of certain protests deserving of the harshest punishment, but which unfortunately had not been signed by their authors. On January 17 a cross made of white wood was planted in the public square of Limay on the very spot where the tree of liberty had stood. It bore the following inscription: "Here lie the mortal remains of the two sisters beloved by all good Frenchmen, Liberty and the Republic. They were murdered on the 5th of December, 1851, and buried on the 17th of January by the rebel of Strasbourg and Boulogne. May God have mercy on them!" A magistrate forthwith opened an inquiry into the matter, but it was fruitless, and the author of this deed was never discovered.

"The enemies of law and order proved incorrigible, but fortunately the armed forces preserved the upper hand. The Radicals were run to earth, and the Revolutionary party was shrunk by fear, by the knowledge of its own weakness, and by the energy of the Government."*

At the beginning of 1852 severe measures had to be resorted to. Heavy fines were imposed, as well as long terms of imprisonment, but not upon the polite and aristocratic opponents of the Government, whose moderation was due to their education. Noisy workmen, frequenters of drinking-bars, and street rowdies were dealt with in large numbers. In the town of Rheims numerous arrests were effected in the one week. The prisoners were all charged with insulting the President of the Republic. Here are some extracts from the charge-sheet:

"Celestin de la Croix was sentenced to ten days' imprisonment for stating in a drinking-bar that Napoleon was a blackguard, who would not remain six weeks in power."

"Madame Cabaret was awarded seven days for saying of the Prince 'that he was only a stuffed doll in the hands of the wealthy classes.'"

"André Ancart got ten days, and four other prisoners were sentenced to two months each, for singing, 'Long live the Reds! down with the Blues!'"

These individual facts afforded their Ministers

* Extract from Government Report.

ample proof that the fermenters of disorder had still to be reckoned with, and their subordinates implored of them to adhere to the vigorous measures which had been put into force against the "Anarchists" (all democrats were then termed "Anarchists"). This wish was expressed by every magistrate in the land. The Bench unanimously asserted that opposition was not extinct, and that it would be madness to relent, or in any way to relax such enactments as had been deemed necessary. It was officially asserted that the Socialist party really existed, that its leaders were unknown, but that those who had been led away by them would soon denounce their chiefs. The Solicitor-General then complained that certain prisoners had been released much too soon. "Respectable citizens conceive great fears at witnessing the return of certain Socialists whose handiwork they saw in '48 and '51, and they are already clamouring for protection."*

* "*To the Minister of Justice and Keeper of the Great Seal.*

"EXCELLENCY,

"I venture to draw your attention and that of the whole Cabinet to the fact that the maintenance of severe repressive measures is urgently called for. The Prince-President deserves the gratitude of the country and every praise for having waged war upon anarchy and political disorder. He has done so successfully, and one of the many benefits conferred by his Government will reside in the fact that he had abolished in France the demoralizing plague of secret societies. But the heads of all societies and insurrections can only be dealt with effectually by transportation" (Solicitor-General's Report of February, 1852, to the Minister of Justice).

In 1855 the following report was issued: "Socialist doc-

The number of crimes had sensibly diminished, thanks to the official pressure brought to bear upon the Opposition. When the newspapers decided to cease all adverse comments, and when Republicans began to obey, the Public Prosecutor adopted milder methods, but the Solicitor-General continued to shower praise upon the firm Government which in return appointed him a State Councillor in 1852, Minister of Justice in 1857, Vice-President of the Senate in 1859, and President of "Cour des Comptes" in 1863. His reports became less numerous, until eventually they dwindled down to half-yearly tables of statistics.

The perusal of all this correspondence sometimes made De Morny forget the hour of lunch. It was often hunger that reminded him of it. He then partook of a very scanty meal, and was back at his desk by two o'clock. The desk, or writing-table, was a magnificent work of art, made of mahogany, and adorned with gilt bronze. Upon it lay a portfolio, filled with deeds and documents awaiting his signature. The morning mail-bag invariably contained numbers of requests. This was not surprising. Under every Govern-

trines are always taken up and acted upon by fanatical adherents. Secret societies invariably help to propagate such doctrines. When harried by the Government, the promoters of disorder are silent, but they are all disposed to act should a favourable opportunity occur. Society can only be protected against them by relentless supervision and energetic repression."

ment, whether ancient or recent, everyone has something to ask. Knowing this, he had not filled up every post that had been created by the coming of a new régime. He was anxious to find a position for Comte Fernand de Montguyon, his old companion, whom he addressed as "My dear Auguste." He was a man who had led a life of pleasure, but who was now anxious to settle down to some serious pursuit, and he thought himself quite fitted to become Director of Fine Arts. Morny was well aware that his friend's claims were of the flimsiest. He knew that the fact of his having spent his life in flitting from the alcove of a singer to that of a ballet-dancer hardly constituted credentials which would entitle him to occupy the high position to which he aspired. But he also said to himself that if one proceeded to sift things to their innermost depths, to scrutinize the qualities of certain Senators, or to analyze the true merits of some of the Emperor's friends, such as Veillard and Mocquart, the result of the examination might not tell in favour of the examinees. As favouritism was the order of the day, why should he not exercise it in behalf of his charming friend ? He almost made up his mind to do so. He even told him that he would soon see he was not forgotten, and that his appointment as Director of Finance on the same grounds would not be more absurd than that of Thayer as Postmaster-General. Unfortunately, Morny had not sufficient time to execute his promise. Réné de

Rovigo also sought preferment in the future Emperor's household. This might have caused some surprise to those who vividly remembered that he was one of the most rabid opponents of the Pretender, and that he openly aired his views in all the Royalist papers. But such sudden conversions were daily occurrences. The Minister knew it well, for had he not himself been an Orleanist together with his colleague Fould, who in 1848 refused to stand by Napoleon together with Billault, another 1848 Republican, and with Baroche, and many others ?

La Gueronnière was not easily satisfied. He had expected something better than a Councillorship. Chassiron, married to Murat's daughter, and related to Napoleon, was a man of very ordinary intellect. He had rendered no important services, but as he considered he was half a Royal Highness, he felt ill-requited by the Mastership of the Rolls. The Padoues, father and son, were ardent solicitors. The former was made a Senator, and the latter became a Prefect and a Privy Councillor.

Petitions, requests, and denunciations lay *pêle-mêle* upon the Minister's table. Prefectures were in great demand. The silver lace of a Prefect's uniform seemed to possess great fascination. Horace de Viel, Castel the Archilochus, the satirist of the Second Empire, was ever urging his claims and those of his whole family. There were too many hunters after the same prey, and the

Minister sighed as he totted up their numbers. He could not make them all Senators, so he turned his attention to other matters. He took up the reports upon the Press, which contained a mass of confidential notes, copies of notices, and a deluge of reprimands that had been sent to the different editors. He first studied the ones concerning the French Press in 1852. They proved conclusively that the position of a journalist in those days was far from being a brilliant one, for the combined sales of all the Paris papers did not reach a hundred and forty thousand copies. Moreover, none of them were in good odour with the existing Government.

They were apprised of the fact by a Ministerial circular, which informed them that every newspaper and journalist who had paid the compulsory deposit was entitled to afford prudent enlightenment and trustworthy information to the public, but with the express understanding that they were not to comment upon any "*reserved*" questions. As all political and economical questions were "reserved," the weather was the only subject which the Press could criticize. All the other Ministers informed the Home Secretary of their grievances, and looked to him to restrain such indiscretions as the Fourth Estate might have been guilty of. Here are a few samples of the complaints that used to reach his department from other Ministries:

"*From the Secretary of War to the Home Secretary.*

"SIR AND DEAR COLLEAGUE,

"We note with grave displeasure that the daily papers are intervening in the affairs of our department. Acting in accordance with the wishes expressed by Your Excellency, I have warned the editor of the *Constitutionnel* to be more circumspect in future when publishing news concerning State departments. *La Presse* and its editor need to be seriously admonished, and we have invited them to put an immediate stop to their ceaseless complaints concerning the alleged excessive cost of this department."

Next comes the Minister of Justice, who is very annoyed "that organs of public opinion should have preserved their nasty habit of obtaining and publishing information of a judicial nature."*

He considered that law reporters should not put their noses into certain cases which they had been forbidden to publish. Such trials only interested the Judge, the jury, and the contending parties, and should not concern public opinion.

* The following is an original manuscript:

"SIR AND DEAR COLLEAGUE,

"I have the honour to ask you officially and quite confidentially to be good enough to take such steps as you may deem fit to prevent the publication of judicial proceedings. I shall feel obliged if you will let me know whether your intervention and that of your Prefect have achieved the end which I desire for reasons that you will no doubt appreciate.

"(Signed) THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE.

"*June* 21, 1859."

The Foreign Office took great umbrage at the fact that a student of history had dared to comment upon the relations between France and Prussia in the year 1814.

As to the Admiralty officials, their indignation was expressed in eloquent terms, and they trained all their guns upon the gossipers who dared to board a man-of-war without being invited, and then to comment upon its equipment.

The Home Secretary was spurred to action by the complaints of his colleagues, so he addressed a general indictment of their actions to all scribblers. He blamed them for writing on religious, political, financial, economic, internal and external matters. Once and for all he warned them in the following terms : " We would have you understand that the dignity of the Administration is seriously jeopardized by those who dare to criticize its acts. The Press cannot be allowed to dictate to the Government or to comment upon its decisions."

Henceforth the Press was controlled, reprimanded, questioned, and cross-examined by all those who possessed a tittle of authority. The Prefect of the North inveighed against a delictuous advertisement that had appeared in the *Progrès*. The Prefects of other provinces likewise complained of the unblushing audacity of some of the journals in their districts. Some of them had actually peered into the private life and doings of the Palace of Compiègne. This action was met by the following circular :

MADAME DE GALLIFET

"*The Prefect of the Oise to the Home Secretary.*

"BEAUVAIS,
"*December* 10, 1858."

"EXCELLENCY,

"I have issued orders that henceforth the newspapers of this district shall refrain from publishing indiscreet details concerning the private doings at the Palace of Compiègne, and that their reports shall only refer to external matters, such as excursions, picnics, hunting-parties, and theatricals.

"I have personally conveyed these orders to the journalists of Beauvais, and shall do so without delay to those of Compiègne, who have already received a warning from one of my Councillors."

The ecclesiastical authorities would have been false to all their traditions had they proved themselves less ticklish than the civil authorities. The Archbishop of Paris insisted with rare energy upon the immediate suppression of an ultramontane publication called the *Echo of Rome*, whose doctrines he deemed excessive, although they had been approved by the Pope!

When we had gone through all these reports we found, to our dismay, that we had only skimmed the archives of the Press Bureau of the Home Office, which so outgrew itself that it was converted into a special department called the General Police.*

* The whole of the Press Service was reorganized. The Government applied the decree of February 17 to the National

The censorship extended to foreign as well as to French papers ; it possessed rapid wings and sharp scissors. Time and again the sale of *Punch*, the *Illustrated News*, and the *Indépendance Belge* was prohibited in France. The following is a report from the Police Commissary at Boulogne-sur-Mer, dated September 3, 1852 :

"PROHIBITED ENGLISH PAPERS.

"*To the Sub-Prefect of the District.*

"SIR,

"In compliance with the orders I received last December from your predecessor, I have continued to seize *Punch* and the *Illustrated News* from the hands of all travellers landing at this port. For some time past travellers have asserted that the latter is not now prohibited in France, where it is sent by post. They therefore grumble when I confiscate it. Will you be good enough to favour me with instructions upon this matter ?

"(Signed) F. RAOULLIS,

"*Commissary of Police.*"

Le Temps was another paper that needed strict supervision. It had had the audacity to assert that in the town of Lille there existed a disreputable house, placed under the patronage of Jesuits, which contained a gambling-room, a drinking-bar, a theatre, and a chapel.

Printing Works and the National Library, and created a number of police-officers, who carried out their work in the smallest hamlets of the country.

La Presse was severely censured for publishing an article entitled "Mysterious Disappearances from Paris." Such information was deemed likely to disturb the peace of mind of the citizens. The same paper had made some very uncomplimentary remarks concerning the police force of Paris. The policemen were accused of mixing with very questionable people, and of imperilling the public safety by neglecting their duty while loitering with their friends. Such want of loyalty on the part of a newspaper could not be tolerated for an instant.

Le Constitutionnel, a semi-official organ, was warned that it was fast losing the confidence of the Government by its comments upon the detective force. . . . Lépigne was deemed deserving of support, but even Lépigne had now and again to be brought into line by a sharp rebuke. More than once the police censured these officious organs, and in some cases for having published articles which were inspired by the head of the State. If Napoleon III. had not worn a crown he would have been a journalist. This applies to many great men. His greatest pleasure was to give free vent to his pen, and to summon to his palace the editor of this or that paper, to whom he would dictate the leading article of the day.*

His copy was always welcomed, and as a reward

* This trait, this taste for journalistic polemics, was common to the late Alexander, to William I. in Germany, to Francis Joseph of Austria, and to other crowned heads whose anonymity must be respected.

the editor and his paper often received a warning two days later which was equivalent to a promise of . . . suppression. Good and bad were lashed with the same whip. . . .

Notwithstanding the precarious condition of journalism, there were still people who founded new journals. De Morny was fully aware of the fact, as it was he alone who could authorize the publication of any newspaper. He exercised the greatest care before allowing a new paper to come into existence, more especially if it was intended to be a political one. Two or three of this sort were considered sufficient for Paris, and so he tolerated two official organs and one Opposition sheet of rose-water strength; no more. He was much more lenient when dealing with the expensive, luxurious, fashionable, and frivolous Press. While refusing all offers and all financial guarantees of poor Duckett for the creation of a wide-minded, intellectual paper like *L'Universel*, he sent for one Chevalot, an innovator with a very poor stock of ideas. He summoned him thus:

"Monsieur Chevalot is requested to call at the Newspaper Registration Office between two and four, with a view to registering his new paper entitled *The Nightcap*."

A few days later a paternal Government allowed this gentleman to sell his sheets on the public thoroughfare. *The Nightcap* was soon rechristened *Olympus*, with the sanction of the authorities.

Among the mass of applications received by the Minister were some containing the most quixotic suggestions. They grew like mushrooms at this particular period. We append a few samples of them.

Monsieur Tremaux de Chavoy repeatedly sought to be relieved of the compulsory payment of a guarantee for the publication of an ultra-humanitarian organ called *The Universal Principle.* This was his application :

" Monsieur le Ministre,

" The very title of my paper will prove to you that I am compelled to acquaint the world with the principles governing human beings, and to compare them with Biblical traditions. . . ."

Henry Heer was not endowed with so stout a courage. He was a weird man of letters, whose brain was somewhat muddled, and whose means of material existence were always hypothetical. He was happy to live, full of self-confidence, as free as Diogenes, and as proud as Juno's bird. He despised hierarchical formulæ, and effected to " thee and thou " the powers that were. It was in this vein of absolute confidence that this obscure citizen of letters was wont to inform His Excellency of his paper not yet born, but already endowed with the charming title *Love.* His familiar and ingenuous style was so full of charm that we reproduce his letter in full :

"'L'Amour' (Literature, Theatres, Fine Arts).

"(*Henry Heer, Editor, No.* 12, *Boulevard de Clichy.*)

"Monsieur le Ministre,

"The publication of *L'Amour* has been delayed owing to pecuniary difficulties. You must understand that my only connection with the paper is that of Managing Director. If you require further details concerning it, you had better confer with Madame de Solms-Ratazzi, 20, Rue Barbey-de-Jouy. She will write my fashion column, and perhaps may provide me with funds. *L'Amour* would have appeared before now were it not for the inconsistency of those who were to finance it. I can start it, however, and make it a genuine success. This could be done if Your Excellency would add a mite to our little fortune—say a couple of hundred pounds. I know that Ministers have little time to spend in the pursuit of literature, but if you could only spare an hour a day to this charming occupation I would undertake to send you every morning a manuscript newspaper which might prove the most pleasant pastime to you.

"Since Villemessant has returned to the paths of wisdom, the *Figaro* is as dull as can be. *The Yellow Dwarf* is both coarse and brutal under the censorship of Silvester, the agent. The *Charivari* is dead, so long live *L'Amour!*

"If Your Excellency will accept me as your

journalist-in-ordinary, you can remunerate me as you think fit—say at the rate of two pounds or even one pound a week. We shall both be pleased, and we shall not have to wait for Madame Ratazzi's money. Please accept the assurances of my distinguished consideration."

Strange as it may appear, this communication was not consigned to the waste-paper basket, but was seriously considered, and the Prefecture of Police reported favourably upon its author. Madame Ratazzi was a cousin of the Emperor. The Press Bureau granted the request of Henry Heer. He and his paper could have soared to success had it not been that the official communication addressed to him bore no stamp. This roused the indignation of Henry Heer, who wrote back saying:

"Sir,

"I am not a Minister, and only receive stamped letters."

Thus ended the short career of *L'Amour*.

The police reports alone determined the action of the Minister in granting or refusing favours. The information supplied concerning applicants was minute and complete. Here is the report furnished by the police upon a well-known journalist and an intimate friend of Comte de Morny:

"Monsieur X. has long been known to the police as an intriguer, a thief, and promoter of spurious

companies. He is a man bereft of morality or political faith. He owes money everywhere, and is ready to serve all parties."

Other reports of a similar nature were sent in concerning Villemessant, the greatest publicist of his day, who knew how to make news out of every rumour, how to turn every piece of news into an advertisement, and every advertisement into money. He made the following official statement :

" *La Chronique de Paris* will henceforth cease to deal with political or economic questions, but wishes to appear twice a month with the same title."*

* *La Chronique de Paris* had gone through many vicissitudes, as is proved by the manuscript letter of the Public Prosecutor to the Prefect of Police. Moreover, its Legitimist ties caused it to be privately denounced. Such private denunciations were frequent at this time. The following is a specimen of the *billets-doux* that reached the hands of Ministers :

" Paris,
" Monsieur le Ministre, " *April* 27, 1852.

" The writer is a devoted supporter of the Government, and will not tolerate any longer the insults hurled by *La Chronique de Paris* at the Chief of the State and the Corps Législatif.

" In its last issue the President was called a *viveur*, and it was stated that, as a great favour, the deputies were not compelled to serve him at table. There should be a limit to such coarse insolence."

" Ministerial Order (Confidential).

" *To the Prefect of Police.*

" Monsieur le Préfet,

" I request of you to obtain immediate information concerning one Cartier, better known as Villemessant, the

Villemessant announced other plans, the coming of which were foreseen between the lines. Forthwith the authorities began the strictest personal inquiries concerning him. It was not a report, but a weighty indictment, containing details which some would dearly like to see omitted. Nothing was omitted. His illegitimate birth, his scant education, his start in life as a wine-traveller at Blois, his commercial failures at Tours and Châteauroux, his precarious existence in Paris, the foundation by him of ephemeral publications like *Le Panier* and *Sylphide*, as well as the reports of certain prosecutions undertaken for private reasons — nothing was forgotten. His excessive love of gambling, his love affairs, his disputes and quarrels—every veil was raised, and his inner life laid bare.

Villemessant, in his memoirs, made a partial confession of his passion for gambling. "Although gambling was not fashionable in my youth, when it was a common saying that all

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editor of *La Chronique de Paris*. I wish to know his antecedents, and what have been his means of existence, his reputation, and his morality. You will kindly have this information afforded me in the shortest possible time.

"(Signed) THE MINISTER."

Answer from the Prefect of Police.

"MONSIEUR LE MINISTRE,

"Herewith please find all the information you require concerning Monsieur Cartier."

(This document is in our possession, and the charges made in it were extremely grave.—AUTHOR'S NOTE.)

gamblers were thieves, I was madly fond of it, and all my friends are aware that I was little favoured by luck. Dennery, Mirés, Siraudin, and myself used to frequent every gambling resort in the town." Villemessant little thought that the police knew him so well, but this mysterious force was in possession of unlimited knowledge and information of the most varied nature. Thus it was able to acquaint the Minister with the original way in which Villemessant founded *La Chronique de Paris*, and laid hands on funds first to do it. Here is the story :

"Ministry of Public Security,
"*July* 17, 1852.

"Monsieur le Ministre,

"After following the Duchess de Berry through Vendée, the so-called Villemessant appeared in Paris, where he founded several theatrical and literary papers, which he inspired if he did not edit them.

"He obtained a free pass to the Paris theatres for a comb merchant named Viel, who afterwards afforded him the necessary funds for *La Chronique de Paris*. This publication has been printed since 1850, first by Bureau, then by Chaix, and by Madame Colambe Martinet. It is now printed at the works of Madame Dondey-Dupré.

"Villemessant has fallen out with the comb merchant, but has come to an arrangement with one Goubaud, a publisher of fashion papers, who will henceforth provide funds for the *Chronique*.

Villemessant undertakes in return to insert advertisements and fashion-plates for him.

"Monsieur Villemessant has no credit among paper merchants or printers, to whom he owes a great deal of money.

"(Signed) GAILLARD,
"*Director of the National Library.*"

This report is quite a poem, dry as it may seem. Others of a similar nature were forwarded to the Home Office, and as a result the Solicitor-General sent a definite *non possumus* to Villemessant's request. The unfortunate *Chronique* was sentenced to death. The Minister soon found that his time was seriously encroached upon by police reports concerning the Press, and decided that henceforth his attachés should undertake the perusal and the answering of them.

Morny was less inclined than any of his colleagues to spend much time in the administrative mazes of his department. He disliked having to resort to vindictive measures, which he looked upon as petty and contemptible, so he handed over to Persigny the task of bullying the Press, of fining, prosecuting, and finally suspending organs of public opinion. The boisterous Maupas accomplished the proud task of issuing ninety-two solemn warnings to the papers in as many hours. While he did this work, Morny could boast of never using his power to the detriment of others. He was really indulgent towards

this class of offenders. One of his colleagues complained in his presence that a Boulevard paper had published some anecdote which should have been withheld. He replied: "What matters? Let them say what they like, so long as they avoid politics. So much the worse for those whose masks are raised." His successor had less compunction about punishing the Press. On one occasion he fined an editor heavily, sentenced him to a month's imprisonment, and suppressed his paper because he had published without authority the Emperor's speech at the opening of Parliament. In the heat of action, in critical moments, he deemed that strength and even violence were compulsory elements of action, but when he had won the day he could prove himself a generous conqueror, who knew that after scoring a victory conciliation was the most skilful weapon he could use. He wrote the following letter to one of his Prefects, whom he warned against persecuting a certain Jacomy:

"Devote all your efforts to the development of the country's wealth, and you will effect a much more useful purpose than by fostering the bitterness of political strifes."*

He was not responsible for the decree of February 18, 1852, by which all papers had to bear

* The context of the above letter has been read by us, and proves that Morny was personally interested in some of Jacomy's speculations—a fact which discounts the merit of his action.—AUTHOR'S NOTE.

EUGÉNIE, EMPRESS OF THE FRENCH

the official stamp, and all editors had to submit to the jurisdiction of the police-courts. "He did not innovate warnings." They were conceived, armed *cap-à-pie*, in the fertile brain of Rouher. His subordinates often vied in their efforts to become strict censors, eager to find fault with everything and anything published in papers. They did so to curry favour with him, but failed singularly. Instead of congratulating them, he would shrug his shoulders and say: "What fools these people are!" He constantly denied the authorship of petty persecutions committed in his name or in that of the Chief of the State on the pretence of defending the Government. His views and objects soared much higher.

The legislative elections were taken in hand at the beginning of January, and he requested his Prefects to exercise the greatest prudence and discretion in selecting official candidates who should be worthy of the esteem of their districts, and men anxious to promote the interests of their constituents. He added that the administrative pressure should not be made felt.*

"Universal suffrage," he declared in his circular on January 8, "depends upon one mainspring only, which no hand can tamper with or deviate." He displayed great ability in conciliation, deriving the greatest possible advantage from the action of

* His theoretical instructions were not heeded, for public opinion was scandalized by the number of nonentities who were returned to Parliament, thanks to their influence in official circles.

the Government, which he mollified to such an extent that it was hardly felt.

Praises were showered upon the intelligence of the Minister of the Interior, whose authority increased daily throughout the country. It was rumoured that his powers were to be extended. He had given a lasting impulse to the various departments of the Home Office, and secured peace in every direction. It was therefore natural that he should seek spheres more germane to his nature, less enslaving, though no less important. Poetry must succeed to prose. A Minister of Finance would be appointed, it was said, and Morny was named as the titular of that post. By extending his sphere of action, he might control the Education Office, the National Library, and the State theatres. His foresight and powers of initiative were such that no one doubted his eventual success in the administration of these different offices.

A great surprise was in store. The opposite of what had been surmised brought about a downfall instead of a promotion. Morny was actually drafting a circular to his Prefects urging them to develop local resources of prosperity, when he was suddenly relieved of his functions by an accident quite unforeseen. It put an end to his Ministerial honeymoon, which, like many others, only lasted six weeks.

On January 22, 1852, Louis Napoleon promulgated two decrees of which he had given no warning. The one created little controversy. It

enjoined that the Orleans Princes must sell all their family property in France within a year. The other, which was described by a Legitimist writer as a document exhaling a vague odour of brigandage, ordered the confiscation of all property given to them by Louis-Philippe on August 7, 1830. All these lands were to become Crown property, and to be assigned to the public services. The confiscation was considered harsh and ill-timed. Many considered it was the prelude of fresh enactments no less arbitrary. The Stock Exchange quotations fell. The middle classes were affrighted, as business investments and speculations came to a standstill. The Orleanists shuddered with ill-concealed indignation. They whispered that Louis Napoleon's memory was short indeed, and that he showed little gratitude considering the kind treatment of his mother, the Duchesse de Saint-Leu, at the hands of Louis-Philippe. They further recalled the indulgence shown by the latter towards the author of the Strasbourg and Boulogne risings. They averred that his generosity had bordered upon weakness with regard to several political prisoners like Persigny, whom Napoleon would have shot had he found them conspiring in the enemies' camp.*

* The ingratitude of Napoleon is a matter of history, for the Bonapartes had often begged of the kindness of the ancient monarchy, whether legitimist or constitutional. They had solicited a great deal from the Orleanists especially. Lucien Bonaparte had bombarded them with requests to be appointed French Ambassador.

The President was severely taken to task by his own set. The petulant Princess Mathilde exclaimed: "If Louis-Philippe had ever cause to be jealous of Louis Napoleon, he would certainly be avenged could he but witness the recent doings of the President." The Faubourg Saint-Germain turned the incident into ridicule. The following letter was distributed in every salon:

"Sir or Madam,

"Anarchy has given birth to despotism; the mother and child are doing well."

Numberless criticisms were propagated throughout the land, and though the countryside was either ignorant of or indifferent to this spoliation, it roused the indignation of the middle classes.

Every effort was made to explain the equity of the new decrees on the ground that the property of the King was an appanage of the State, and must therefore remain in the hands of the State. How-

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The following passage appears in the "Memoirs of the Duchesse de Dino." It was written in 1833:

"I have seen the Empress Joséphine and Madame de Saint-Leu soliciting an audience of Louis XVIII. a fortnight after Napoleon's downfall. In London I was present when Lucien Bonaparte was introduced to the Duke of Wellington by Lady Aldborough, and at the Congress of Vienna I heard Eugène de Beauharnais singing ballads. The old dynasty possibly lacked ability, but the new ones are certainly bereft of self-respect and dignity. It is true that Louis-Philippe himself had dispossessed the elder branch as much as in his power lay. This was a source of constant remorse with the pious Marie Adelaide. On the eve of the Revolution of 1848 he was defending an action against the Comte de Chambord."

ever legal and justifiable their action might have been, the governing powers had acted too soon, at a time when the public mind was not yet reassured, and when the middle classes still feared fresh adventures and further agitation.*

Comte de Morny felt that he owed a deep debt of gratitude to the memory of the Duc d'Orléans. He opposed this exceptional measure, which he deemed both impolitic and unpopular. The day before it was enacted he had listened to bitter complaints at a dinner given by Comtesse Lehon. Comte de Montalivet, who knew the private feelings of Morny, had come to protest to him against this spoliation. As a result, Morny thought it his duty to intervene, and to make verbal observations to the Prince-President. He had hoped that his advice would be accepted, and that the decrees would be annulled, but Fate decreed otherwise. Being unable to alter his brother's

* " Information has reached me from different quarters to the effect that these decrees are condemned from a political point of view, not only by members of the party that they affect, but by men who are sincerely devoted to the cause of Prince Louis Napoleon, and decided to maintain his power and authority " (Report of the Solicitor-General, February, 1852).

" The second decree of the 22nd of January, relating to the estates of the Orleans family, has greatly perturbed the middle classes of Rheims. They have been loud in their complaints, and are organizing a demonstration which will take place during the Elections. This class of persons is mainly composed of merchants and tradesmen " (manuscript report of the Solicitor-General to the Minister of Justice, February, 1852).

decision, Morny had but one alternative: he resigned.

The nefarious impression created by the decrees soon faded away. Tears ceased to flow over the sad fate of the Orleans, who had only a hundred millions or so with which to make ends meet. Their sympathizers thought it better to look after their own business than expend their grief upon the cause of the Orleanists. But Morny had ceased to be a Minister, and Persigny ruled in his stead.

The confiscation of the Orleans estate did not alone lead to the resignation of De Morny. There were other reasons of a more intimate nature.

He had been badly advised in taking certain steps which were not dictated by his usual prudence and sagacity. As a result, his prestige received a heavy blow. On the morrow of that December day when Napoleon effected his great coup Morny claimed by right the official recognition of his origin—this at a moment when Napoleon was paving the way to his Empire, and drafting his list of Imperial Highnesses and Court dignitaries. As a rule, De Morny displayed more wisdom. In business matters he possessed the crafty prudence of a financier, the cold penetration of a diplomatist, and the reserve of a confessor. He was master of himself, but was seldom mastered by others. His reasoning powers, his sound judgment, only betrayed him upon one point. This was the point that he was not allowed to elucidate, however much he desired to do so.

Morny was singularly proud of his affiliation, though it was doubly irregular. When he had obtained power, he eagerly informed those around him of the connecting-link created between Talleyrand and himself, through Flahaut, his father. He was a gentleman whose conventional morality was as flimsy as the air, and he was proud to call himself the grandson of the famous statesman. His self-pride was flattered and his ironical tendencies tickled by the fact that Louis XV. was perhaps his great-grandfather, and that he could therefore add a lily to the bunch of hortensias which formed his crest, upon a coat of arms bearing a bar sinister. It also pleased him to reflect that Talleyrand was his ancestor, that his father was a General of the Empire, a Queen his mother, and an Emperor his brother. This extraordinary pedigree was thus explained by him :

"I call my father 'Count,' I call my daughter 'Princess,' and I say to my brother 'Majesty.' I bear the title of Count, and all this is most natural."

Of his own accord he had informed the world of the secrecy which surrounded his cradle. It was quite natural that society should be keenly interested in discovering the origin of such an exalted personage, and the curiosity of society was duly whetted when he himself made known far and wide that he had not sprung from an obscure source, and that his parents were no commoners. He threw full light upon the subject by encouraging indiscretions which his half-

brother thought most shocking and insulting to the honour of their mother. The two men were obsessed by a common thought, which they could not express freely. The one yearned to do so on the housetops, the other hoped that the expression of such a thought would only be re-echoed by their own consciences.

Morny set forth his filial claim by signs which appealed to the eye. For instance, he displayed a singular affection for the hortensia, the family flower. On all occasions he spoke freely of his ancestry, eager that it should be thoroughly well known. He gave a magnificent ball at the Ministry of the Interior at the beginning of January, 1852. The élite of Paris society was present, and Morny did the honours with his usual grace and elegance. He came up to Granier de Cassagnac, one of his guests, and, catching him by the arm, he said: "Come with me; I wish to present you to my father, the Comte de Flahaut." Such incidents were commented upon, and they irritated a brother whose affection was greatly overrated by De Morny.*

Morny went further, for he endeavoured to precipitate events by forcing his way into the Napoleonic lineage. While Louis opposed his wishes mildly but firmly, out of respect for their mother's memory, and lest he might prejudice the

* The Emperor's task was singularly handicapped by the numerous relatives who gathered round him—to wit, a pseudo-son of Hortense and Louis Bonaparte, Walewski, Morny, and many others.

cause of his dynasty, Auguste urged his claims repeatedly, and asked why he should not enjoy the rank and privileges which were the appanage of his princely origin. Finding that his claims were not acceded to, he decided to arrogate unto himself in principle what was denied to him in fact. He had not yet gone so far as to emboss upon the panels of his carriage the eloquent coat of arms which he used in 1857 as Ambassador-Extraordinary to Russia, the bunch of hortensias, with the motto, *Tace, sed memento.* But he had expressed what he should have suppressed, and so loudly did he explain his family ties that he incurred the grave displeasure of his brother. On January 4, 1852, Berger, the Prefect of the Seine, gave a banquet in honour of Morny, the Minister, at which Morny proposed a toast in terms which set forth quite clearly his relationship with the head of the State. In February, 1854, an English newspaper published a leading article upon "The Recognition of Morny's Rights as the Son of Queen Hortense and of King Louis."

This time he had gone too far. The Prince's advisers were only too anxious to exaggerate the truth, and to envenom the untenable position of the man who had been guilty of such grave indiscretions. The crisis became acute, and Morny was summoned to the presence of the Emperor. The two brothers discussed the situation in the bitterest terms.

This occurred at the eve of the day when the

new régime was permanently established. Napoleon was anxious to maintain his exclusive preponderance, and to sever such ties as bound him to those who had helped him to establish his power. He was angered by the conversation, during which his brother had sunk differences of rank by invoking blood-relationship. For these reasons Napoleon welcomed the denunciations of Morny's enemies. Maupas called on the Prince-President at this opportune time, as if forewarned of the state of mind in which he would find his master. He came to complain of the dealings of Morny towards himself, and he held proofs irrefutable of the ill-will of the Minister of the Interior towards him, the Prefect of Police. He stated that he could not continue to serve the Emperor under such conditions. He advisedly addressed as " Emperor " Louis Napoleon, who was only the Prince-President. Then came the turn of Achille Fould, whose arguments dealt a heavy blow to the prestige of Morny. Fould used his consummate art in disguising his own ambition and his personal antipathy. He proved with much reticence and with expressions of deep regret that the " chosen one " of France must henceforth dispense with the services of Monsieur de Morny.

The latter had wounded the self-pride and kindled the keen enmity of many influential men. He had estranged Persigny, whom the Prince-President had always wished to number among his counsellors, and whose appointment Morny

had always opposed. Fould pretended to be devoted to the Minister of the Interior, while he insinuated that the latter's relations with the Chief of the State and with several of his own colleagues assumed such a hurtful air of superiority that they could only cause serious injury to the welfare of the State. So premeditated was Fould's action that he had actually proceeded to form a new Cabinet. He was ably helped in his intrigue by Maupas,* who did not forget that on the eve of the *coup d'état* Morny had almost deprived him of the coveted Prefecture of Police, which had been assigned to him.

Morny was not passionately enamoured of power. His tastes were those of a dilettante, and his intelligence mobile. He preferred direct action to the direction of affairs. He sought adventure for the sake of adventure, like most men of a militant nature to whom life is monotonous when bereft of struggle and of strenuous effort. He might have taken as his motto the saying of Napoleon I. : " I like power, it is true, but I like it as an artist. I love it as an artist loves his violin, and I wish to extract from it sounds, harmony, and melody." When he first became

* We read the following words in the " Memoirs of Henry Greville "; they were spoken of Thiers of March 18, 1852 : " The President will not tolerate contradiction or familiarity ; that is the cause of his quarrel with Monsieur de Morny, who showed a great want of tact by boasting of his relationship with the President, and by making too much capital out of it.

a Minister, he was fired by activity, but he was soon overcome by lassitude and the premature sense of monotony caused by administrative subjection. He was crushed by the thousand and one official reports which represent the tedious side of political life. He hated official deeds and documents. He avoided empty phrases, and despised the written formalities which constitute a large part of a statesman's correspondence. He had, however, grown fond of power, and he did not resign without regret. A splendid gambler, he saved his face, and met his fate with the utmost dignity.

In 1834 the Duchesse de Dino wrote the following lines, which were inspired by Talleyrand, her uncle: "In the course of a political career it is most important to know how and when to retreat, so that you may leave the stage with a graceful smile, greeted by the applause of the public, instead of being hissed off." As he was not compelled to divulge the subject and the result of the conversation between himself and the Chief of the State, he made no mention of it. But when the psychological moment came he brought about a Ministerial crisis which caused the downfall of a good many of his colleagues. With dignity and great modesty he explained the motives of his action to the public, and won his case. He proved himself to be a statesman, and his circulars to the authorities throughout the country had enabled them to appreciate his weighty intelligence and

his diplomatic prudence. Before abandoning a position which he could no longer retain, but which he was supposed to have occupied like a victorious General upon the field of battle, he skilfully planned a brilliant retreat. His splendid self-sacrifice was unanimously praised. The constancy of his nature, his staunch fidelity towards his friends, and his unselfish conduct, were extolled in every key. He remained the favourite of the salons. He was still De Morny.

CHAPTER VI

AN "EXTRAORDINARY" AMBASSADORIAL MISSION

After the resignation of the Cabinet—Morny and the high officials—Conflicting jealousies and intrigues—With a view to temporizing, Morny again devotes himself to business—He is appointed President of the Corps Législatif—His friendly relations with the mighty barons of finance follow their happy course—He becomes a speculating statesman, a genus hitherto unknown—The general activity of Comte de Morny—How he was chosen as Ambassador-Extraordinary to the Russian Court—The lavish elegance of the French Mission—A picturesque description of the journey of Morny and his attachés to Moscow and St. Petersburg—The Mission promptly wins the sympathy and goodwill of the Tzar and of the most exalted Russian society—Morny's efforts to turn to useful account, in behalf of his country and his Government, the influence which he wielded upon Alexander II. —Imperialist diplomacy does not second his successful negotiations—Morny's letters to the Emperor of the French and to the French Foreign Minister—Between two Sovereigns—The dignified independence of his language—His recall to France on the morrow of his marriage with a lady at the Russian Court.

As Morny descended the steps of power Louis Napoleon was about to reach its zenith. What strange changes had been wrought in the fate and career of this man, this brother whom he barely knew a few years previously! What was he then? A pretender without an aureola,

eating his heart in exile, consumed by ambition, regrets, and chafing with impatience. To-morrow he will be the Emperor. In a word, he is everything. Napoleon III. might well have said, like Cicero on his triumphal return from Brindes after the prescriptions of Clodius: "I feel I am not only returning from exile, but flying to heaven."

The late Minister, who had so much contributed to all this greatness, was almost relegated to oblivion. Comtesse Lehon, the Princes d'Orléans, and the foolishly-besmeared memory of Queen Hortense were so many causes of discord between the two brothers. Louis Napoleon returned to his original prejudices, caused by the intelligent pressure exercised by Morny during the preliminary stages of the *coup d'état*, a pressure in no way gratifying to his authoritative personality. The disunion was in truth but a passing one, by no means deep-rooted, and would have disappeared like smoke had it not been eagerly fanned by willing souls such as are found in every community.

In high Imperial circles sentiments and opinions did not always go hand-in-hand, though they were often linked by motives of self-interest. As soon as success was achieved, one and all wished to be considered the instigators or actual authors of the play, and they vied in their efforts to impress the man in power with a full sense of their importance. They

endeavoured to minimize that of the part played by Morny because it was the preponderating one.*

As soon as the battle was over, Maupas had endeavoured by every means to convey the impression to one and all that in the preparation of the great act he had ignored the existence of the Minister of the Interior (although he was placed directly under the orders of the latter), and had also refused to recognize the Minister of War, although Paris was in a state of siege. According to himself, Maupas' allies had been his own initiative, wisdom, foresight, and strength.†

Saint-Arnaud, the soldier of fortune, who had changed his name as easily as his uniform, and called himself Le Roy, just as Persigny, the noble Count and future Duke, had been known as Fialin—Saint-Arnaud and General Fleury did their utmost to keep Morny in the background, in order to throw full light upon the military leaders,‡

* However much they vied in proving that they were mainly responsible for this political outrage, the fact remains that the idea of the *coup d'état* was suggested by Morny to his brother, and that Morny deliberately carried out what he had planned.

† Maupas hated Morny. He spared nothing in his conversations with the Imperialist members of the right, or in the Memoirs, which he wrote with a pen most unfair, in order to belittle him in the judgment of history, to efface such influence as he possessed in the counsels of the Government, to lower his dignity, and to place in bold relief the weaker sides of his nature.

‡ Morny was much more generous in recognizing the services rendered by his co-operators. He used to say to Fleury

AUGUSTE DE MORNY IN 1858

A. DOUMENQ

although they were only the agents of the civil authorities. As Persigny, the fanatic, the fire-eater, if ever there was one, he was as loud as the others in claiming the lion's share in the doing of December 2.*

In truth, none of them cared for Morny. The Jérôme Napoleons were also very cool towards him. This was not surprising, for they could hardly have been expected to deal lightly with the clandestine descendant of the Beauharnais when they resented so bitterly the exaltation of him who showered gifts and favours upon them. At this very time they were busy spreading the rumour that Louis, King of Holland, had officially disclaimed all responsibility towards his wife several months before she gave birth to Louis Napoleon. They added that this deed of disclaimer had been registered and deposited in the archives of the Ministry of Justice at the Hague, and that it had been shown to the Marquis de Jouffroy by a high official named Bex. Prince Napoleon went further still by affirming that he

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who had seen to the military organization of the enterprise : " It is neither Saint-Arnaud nor myself who made the *coup d'état ;* it was you, since you alone afforded us the means of carrying it out."

* The Duc de Persigny was perhaps not a great servant of France, but he was certainly a great servant of the dynasty (Thouvenel). So far as the executive portion of the *coup d'état* was concerned, Persigny's share of it did not go beyond the mission confided to him as special commissionary attached to Espinasse. All he did was to take possession of the Chamber of Deputies and to arrest the Questors.

held thirty-three important letters referring to the paternal disavowal.*

Jérôme accepted the princely gifts of his cousin without the slightest hesitation, and at the same time displayed bitter hatred towards him and towards Morny, whom he hated because he had placed Napoleon upon that throne from which he and his father considered themselves ousted. When it was suggested that Morny should be given the presidency of the Corps Législatif as a compensation for the loss of the Ministry of the Interior, the whole Jérôme faction rose in arms and successfully frustrated the Emperor's original intention. The late King of Westphalia, Prince and Field-Marshal, had signified his intention of resigning the presidency of the Senate if Morny was appointed to that of the Chamber. In all likelihood he would have done nothing of the sort, but as a result the nephew submitted to the uncle, and Morny sat silently on his bench representing the department of the Puy-de-Dôme.

In this world it is indispensable to persevere and wait. Morny had plenty of time on hand, so he returned to the Stock Exchange, and became once more a promoter, a speculator, and an industrial manufacturer. Now that he had thrown his portfolio overboard, he enjoyed much more

* If such letters ever existed, they were easily negatived by most fatherly epistles addressed by the same fickle King of Holland to *his son*, Louis Napoleon.

freedom, and meant to use it to good purpose. He had not long to wait, for business flowed to him without his having to seek it. Boards of directors sought him, and were prepared to pay anything in order to obtain his influence, real or fictitious. So with very little trouble such ready money as he had increased by leaps and bounds, and he was thus enabled to add considerably in numbers and in value to his art collections.

It was a period of intense industrial fever. The member for the Puy-de-Dôme threw himself headlong into all sorts of undertakings and combinations, more or less honourable, and he always asserted that the Chief of the State approved of and encouraged his transactions, though in many cases the Emperor was far more inclined to blame him than to praise him.* He did not, however, devote all his time to such pursuits. Now and again he went to the Corps Législatif and voted with the Government. Then, at Court he would make up for lost time by cajoling the Sovereign, his brother, and hence he would appear in the famous salons of the day, thus doing everything to uphold his position in the highest social and political spheres.

In this way he bore his soul in patience when, in July, 1854, the choice of the Emperor fell upon him as successor to De Billault, the President of

* Kinglake, the historian, has published some very curious details concerning the speculations effected by Morny previous to the year 1860.

the Corps Législatif, who had been appointed Minister of the Interior. The position was an exalted one, and quite easily filled in fair weather, for the requisite qualities of a President were tact, discretion, and discernment. In very few days Morny proved that he was amply equipped for his new work.

He was compelled to make certain changes in his daily habits and mode of life, but, on the other hand, he gained increased moral authority, derived from the very responsibility with which he was invested in virtue of his new calling. He did his best to sever all connection with business and industrial matters, but he was pinned in too many directions, and found it impossible to throw up at once the business matters which he had undertaken to direct.

He must have argued with himself that in our modern society business and politics often go hand-in-hand, that the old Roman theory which propounded the incompatibility of commercial and industrial enterprise with the political aspiration of a citizen had long since been exploded in modern Europe, and that he was better fitted than anyone else to effect a dual purpose with the means and energy at his disposal.

He did not consider it derogatory to personify the burning appetites and thirst for lucre of society at large under the newly assumed features of a speculator in power.

The emotions caused by financial struggles were

those dearest to the heart of Morny, and much as he tried to forego them, he continued to play his political part in the violent vortex of conflicting financial interests. It would be idle to suggest that he was uniformly prudent and well-advised. It would have been wellnigh impossible for him to avoid certain discomfitures, considering the risky and sometimes shady nature of the businesses in which he was involved. Some of his *coups* on 'Change were rash acts, for which he paid dearly. I have heard more than once in the family circle of Monsieur de Quivières, De Morny's stockbroker, that on the eve of the war with Italy he effected a most disastrous *coup*. He surmised that the news of this grave conflict would cause a temporary panic on the market, so he beared it for an enormous sum. Public confidence, however, grew stronger: the price of Stocks rose; the bulls won the day, and Morny, the bear, suffered enormous losses.*

His powerful patronage was still at the disposal of bankers and traffickers, and he was ever willing to grant audience to those who wanted to discuss

* Public attention was drawn to these doings, which were commented upon within and without the Empire. About this time Prince Metternich wrote as follows : " I have no doubt that your attention is also arrested by the fever of speculation which is playing havoc with France. Herein lurks a danger infinitely greater to my mind than all others, both for the country itself and for the rest of Europe. It is quite evident that Louis Napoleon had sought and found in Stock Exchange speculations a means of diverting public attention from political questions " (" Memoirs of Metternich ").

business matters with him, provided the business was sufficiently important.

"Count or Duke [later on, "Monsieur le Président"], it is our wish to float a most important and profitable business, but we consider it wise to submit it to His Majesty before attempting anything in the matter, so we have ventured to hope," etc.

Such were the terms used by those who had been admitted in his august presence. As the promoters developed their scheme and afforded more precise information, his frigid and motionless features betrayed slight animation. At that very moment—a most important one in the opinion of the promoters—one of his ushers would enter the room and say: "His Majesty the Emperor would speak with Comte de Morny." A fortuitous convocation indeed! He promised to make good use of it, and to recommend this most interesting matter to His Majesty. The visitors withdrew, beaming with joy and full of hopes as to the result of this consultation with Monsieur le Président of the Corps Législatif.

The Princes and Barons of high finance also knew the road that led to the Presidency. Although he took considerable pains to hide his hand in all these dealings, those in well-informed circles knew perfectly well whether or not they could say, "Morny is in this business."

He was accused of shamefully abusing his influence in their shady transactions, which un-

doubtedly yielded to him the lion's share. The critics did not spare him, and he was publicly discussed and twitted for his actions. Details and facts were repeated, and caused most unfavourable comments. Public opinion eventually took umbrage at this. His personal doings were interpreted by the opponents of his régime as convincing symptoms of the condition of mind and of the culpable practices indulged in by those in power. At this time the famous legend of the "corruption of the Empire" was born. It soon waxed strong. Some years later a famous criminal case was being tried at the Paris Assizes, and the bitter pen of a famous political pamphleteer* inquired: "Do they not say that Morny is in this?"

Notwithstanding all this, he faithfully discharged the duties of his office. He did so with all the ease and apparent nonchalance with which he applied his great intellect to the most various pursuits, thus hiding the cares and worries which so often beset him. It had required a very short time to make him an ideal President. He could handle the regulations and enforce the rules with consummate art. He never failed to apply those rules to the best possible interests of the Government.

While he was thus engaged, a most agreeable and flattering change of office was afforded him during the summer of 1856. Owing to a concourse of exceptional circumstances, he was ap-

* Henri Rochefort.

pointed Ambassador in Ordinary and Extraordinary to the Court of Russia.

The wounds of the Crimean War were healed; the rivers of blood which had uselessly flown were lost in the ocean of oblivion; and if the hearts of the people still wore crape, the relations between the Sovereigns had long since discarded all signs of mourning. They had shaken hands upon the field of carnage, and reconciliation had given rise to the hope that a complete union might soon be effected between France and Russia.

On the other hand, new difficulties surged upon other parts of the horizon of Europe. The possibility of a war with Austria at no distant date made it incumbent upon France to secure, if not a formal alliance with, at least the benevolent neutrality of, Russia. Napoleon, therefore, seized the first available opportunity of obtaining it.

While the ceremonies of the coronation of Alexander II. were being rehearsed in the Muscovite Cathedral, it was decided at a meeting of the Council that France should be represented at Petersburg by a diplomatist of the first rank.

It was deemed advisable to entrust a mission of such importance to the most exalted person in the State next to the Emperor himself. Who could this be if not Comte de Morny? His political reputation, as well as his charming wit and perfect courtesy, marked him as the fit and proper person for such a mission. The news of

his appointment was received with unanimous approbation. Men of all shades of opinion agreed upon this, the event of the day, which afforded much food for gossip and for the exchange of ideas. The following extract is from a letter from Comtesse de Damérmont to the diplomatist Thouvenel :

" Yesterday the sole subject of conversation was the ' Extraordinary ' to the Court of Russia. You know that he is the man who has to call his father ' Sir,' his daughter ' Mademoiselle,' and his brother ' Your Majesty.' It is a relief, I assure you, to meet an individual whose promotion has not made him suffer from vertigo when one lives in the midst of so many inflated balloons. Morny deserves the greatest praise for having remained a good fellow notwithstanding his success and all the flattery bestowed upon him. He is a good fellow in the fullest sense of the word, and has not become an unbearable jackanapes, like so many that you and I know."

All agreed that he was the right man in the right place, the best qualified to interpret the French spirit and wit, thanks to his brilliant qualities and his wonderful self-control.

Morny's departure was postponed till midsummer, and Napoleon despatched to his herald, Edgar Ney,* the bearer of an autograph letter from the Emperor of the French to the Tzar.

* The younger son of Field-Marshal Ney, he was Aide-de-Camp to Napoleon III., Prince de la Moskowa, Senator of the Empire, and Master of the Buckhounds.

Ney had to prepare the way for Morny, and officially resume diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Toward the end of July, 1856, Morny arrived in Berlin, after an enforced stay at Wiesbaden for reasons of health. This delay very nearly enabled the Ambassadors of other countries to reach the goal before he did, for Napoleon III. was not the only monarch who had decided to afford Russia this proof of international courtesy. Other States besides France had lent themselves to these demonstrations of affection which were not altogether devoid of political designs.

Austria-Hungary had entrusted her interests to Prince Esterhazy, who had been Ambassador in London, and had left charming memories of his refined wit, his upright, noble character, and the steadfastness of his friendship.

Great Britain had chosen as her representative a great and powerful Peer, George Leveson-Gower, the second Earl Granville, son of the first Earl Granville, the distinguished diplomatist, and of the Countess of Granville, a daughter of the House of Devonshire. He belonged to one of the oldest English families, the Gowers, that of the Dukes of Sutherland. He was born in a political centre and rocked in a political cradle. Like Macaulay and Lord John Russell, his childhood was spent among statesmen and orators. His masters and his friends were men of superior attainments, destined to lead and govern

nations. He had reached the highest positions in the State by quick and easy stages, and succeeded to Lord Palmerston, the most remarkable personality of his time.*

Lord Granville was President of the Privy Council in 1853, having previously held office as Master of the Buckhounds, as Financial Secretary to the War Office, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, and Financial Secretary to the Admiralty. His choice as Ambassador Extraordinary was as fully justified in England as that of De Morny was in France.

The European Powers who were most interested in asserting their influence at the Court of St. Petersburg had thus vied with one another in the persons, the rank, and the fortunes of their respective Ambassadors.

From Berlin, Comte de Morny was to reach Petersburg via Koenigsberg and Kovno. He was joined in the Prussian capital by his secretaries and attachés, one of whom, Comte Joachim Murat, published his impressions of the memorable journey for the benefit of a few intimate friends.

Forty-eight hours were spent in the city of Frederick, and as the Court was absent the

* Palmerston's downfall was due to the hostility of the Court, the personal animosity of the Prince Consort, and the differences of opinion between the Prime Minister and his colleagues. His constant quarrels with the Queen, his very overbearing and rough manners, and, above all, his noisy approval of the Bonapartist *coup d'état*, were so many reasons which made it impossible for him to retain power.

travellers visited the palace of Charlottenburg, Potsdam, and the legendary castle of Sans-Souci. On July 30 the French travellers were borne away towards Koenigsberg, which they reached the following evening. Though this was the first stage of the journey, they had reached the terminus of railway locomotion, for in the year 1856 Europe had not yet become a network of steel meshes. That same night two coaches were ready to convey them into Russia: one, a comfortable English barouche, was reserved for the private use of Comte de Morny; his companions followed in the second carriage. In twelve hours they reached Stallupohnen, the first stage, where they were met by an Imperial messenger despatched by Prince Gortschakoff. He placed himself at the disposal of the French Mission, and then, resuming his seat upon his sledge, he was borne away by three swift steeds to announce the coming of the French Ambassador at the next station on the road. Then began the wonderful race of the Tzar's messenger upon his slight chariot. He seemed to devour distance and get over incredible obstacles with extraordinary speed. The travellers followed in his wake across a succession of plains not unlike those of Pomerania. At each stage apartments were got ready, while the military and civil authorities, in full uniform, came forward to do the honours of each locality, which were nothing if not rudimentary. As usual, the inevitable Russian divan was placed at the disposal of His Excellency—

the divan upon which the traveller is satisfied to sleep, wrapped in his fur pelisse, without more ado. The room contained a table and a few chairs, but the travellers never saw a bed. The Ambassador was, however, forewarned of the lack of sleeping accommodation, and, having provided himself with a folding-bed, he had it erected at each halting-place, and enjoyed refreshing sleep, while his companions roughed it upon the sofa and the chairs, using their travelling-bags as pillows. Morny had also had the prudence to take his chef, cooking utensils, and choice preserves. These wise measures were fully appreciated by those whose appetites were whetted by the long journey and the bracing air.

On August 1, upon one of those long summer days when the sun in Russia almost commingles its twilight and its dawn, they reached the walls of Kovno. It was eleven o'clock, and night had just fallen. The Government Palace seemed to be illuminated for some great feast. The French visitors felt that they were the expected guests, bidden to a sumptuous table upon which was served an excellent supper. They could not refuse the invitation extended to them, and they remained in this hospitable palace until dawn. They then left Kovno, and, fording the limpid stream which circled the town, they reached the highroad. They soon saw a brougham, drawn by three horses, coming towards them. It was the equipage of a high official in the Postal Depart-

ment, whom the Postmaster-General, Comte d'Adelberg, had sent with orders to wait upon the French Ambassador until his arrival at Petersburg.

The journey was effected day by day without haste or discomfort. During its course one or other of his suite would ride in the carriage of the chief, or he, leaving his barouche, would join his staff in the other carriage. Then conversation was kindled, and touched upon every subject of interest. On the third day they went through the fortified town of Ostoff. On the fourth they stopped before Gattchina, and visited one of the most beautiful Imperial palaces in holy Russia. It had been built by Prince Orloff, the famous favourite of Catherine, when he was at the zenith of his prosperity. At his death the Empress bought it, and presented it to the Grand Duke Paul. The journey was resumed. Another thirty versts, and Petersburg was reached. The three carriages rolled triumphantly into the political capital of Russia.

The French Mission had to take up its quarters at the Woronzoff-Daschkoff Palace, where a portion of his personnel had already arrived. This princely residence was situated on the left bank of the Neva, between the Winter Palace of the Tzars and the Hermitage Castle. It contained apartments furnished with supreme elegance, and commanded an unrivalled panorama. The river had thrown off the heavy crystal flooring which compresses its course during one hundred and fifty

days of the year, and flowed under their eyes like a great sheet of milky water. In the distance the silhouette of the far-off town stood out upon the line of horizon, pointing its golden spires towards heaven. Morny imparted to this luxurious palace of the Woronzoffs an atmosphere of intimacy, for he filled his temporary residence with his marvellous collections of art and paintings which had preceded him from Paris. He could thus imagine that he was in Petersburg and Paris at one and the same time, simultaneously the guest and the host of the Tzar. There he lived and received his numerous callers, surrounded by his precious pictures, the friends whom he had taken so much time and labour to bring together.

On the morrow of his arrival, Morny rose early and proceeded forthwith to visit the collections of the Hermitage. He was aware that his new friends, the Russians, boasted of possessing there, among other famous pictures, an original Metzu. He was convinced that he possessed something much better than a copy of the same work. As soon as he had discharged his duties towards Gortschakoff, the Prince-Chancellor, he hastened to satisfy his curiosity. Without hesitation he came to the final conclusion that his was the genuine picture, and that the false, the fraudulent Metzu had not been sent to the Avenue Montaigne, but had found its way to the shores of the Neva. Satisfied on this point, he admired at leisure the artistic wealth accumulated in the

Hermitage Palace since the days of Catherine II. He spent the rest of the day on horseback, riding along the principal avenues of the city, and in the islands of the Neva (which constitute the Bois de Boulogne of St. Petersburg), studded as they are with charming villas in which the élite of Russian society takes up its winter quarters.

On his return in the evening, the Ambassador received an official communication, which informed him that he might have the pleasure of handing his credentials to the Emperor on Thursday, the 7th, at Peterhof, and presenting to Their Majesties the personnel of his Embassy. The delay between the date of his arrival had been as brief as possible. Things were shaping for the best, the more so as Prince Esterhazy, the Austrian Envoy, was expected daily. He had followed the route of the French Plenipotentiary since he had left Kovno. Lord Granville was also due to land at Cronstadt off the ship *St. John of Acre.*

The Ambassador-Extraordinary of France and his attachés repaired to the Peterhof Palace on the day and at the hour assigned. Two masters of ceremonies covered with gold lace were waiting to introduce them into the August Presence.

Orders had been given that a collation should be served to them, and that they should be accompanied to apartments where they could rest at their ease. Then gala carriages drove up the avenues of the park, and came to take the exalted delegate of the Emperor Napoleon III. with his

ELISABETH, EMPRESS OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

suite to the audience granted them by the Tzar Alexander II. The great officers of State received the Ambassador, and, preceding him, led him to their master, the Tzar of all Russia. Two negroes of high stature, magnificent specimens of the dark continent, proudly wearing the white turban and the green jacket seamed with gold, stood motionless at each door. These doors of the throne-room were forthwith open; the Emperor's appearance was less imposing than that of his father, Nicholas I., but the expression of his face was much more benevolent.* The members of the Embassy were inclined to look upon him at once in the light of a shepherd, as the father of nations, because, forsooth, he condescended to bestow upon each of them a half-smile or a gracious word.

Comte de Morny and his suite were introduced to the Sovereign Lady, the Tzarina, with the same ceremony. She received them standing, clad in a sumptuous dress dazzling with precious stones; two pages bore her train of gold brocade. By the side of the Empress stood Princess Soltikoff, the grand mistress of her household, and two ladies of honour wearing the national Court costume. Her features were refined and delicate, full of natural

* His benevolence was a relative one, that of an autocrat. Much as has been said about the benevolence of Tzar Alexander II., it is not easy for the historian to forget that he had a Prince shot while in the act of prayer, that he crushed the Polish rebellion with untold severity, and that the excesses of his Cossacks were condoned by his silence.

amenity, and she bore herself with that air of dignity which is imparted by the habit of greatness. She was graceful, and her welcome was as warm as could be wished.

As soon as the two audiences were over, the high dignitaries who surrounded Their Majesties came in turn to visit Comte de Morny. A thousand compliments were exchanged, and the pleasant proceedings were concluded by a drive through the park of Peterhof until dinner-hour. The meal was worthy of the host and of his guests, and even the liveries of the domesticity lent a vivid note to a really beautiful scene. The waiters wore red, while the remainder of the servants were clad in the Imperial green and gold livery. On the morrow Comte de Morny was invited to attend a religious ceremony in the Castle, quite an intimate ceremony in commemoration of the thirty-second anniversary of the daughter of Louis II., Grand-Duke of Hesse, and the consort of the Tzar Alexander II. He was present at the ball that followed. Every attention was shown to the members of the French Mission. The guests slept at the Palace, and the following morning a steamer brought them back to the Woronzoff Palace. The kindly dispositions of the Court of Peterhof towards them could not be displayed in a more flattering manner. Morny was broken to every social rule and etiquette, and he won the sympathy of all. They admired the natural quickness with which he excelled in finding the right word

on every occasion, and though in these foreign surroundings his memory and his ready wit might have been slightly handicapped at times, he only made one mistake, but so interesting that we relate it here. The subject of conversation was the French Court and the spouse of Napoleon III. Though it has been asserted that, from the moment the Emperor conceived a strong passion for the young Comtesse de Teba, De Morny had joined the ranks of the amorous against those of graver politicians, he never really was a very warm supporter of the Empress Eugénie. Being a wise man, he merely submitted to the force of circumstances. One night at the Winter Palace he was conversing with the imposing Dowager-Empress, the widow of Nicholas I., and the Princess of Hesse, as amiable as she was good. Suddenly the diplomatist began to extol the merits of the Empress of the French. What with her delightful grace and her illustrious paternal origin, she was certainly as good, he said, as these little German Princesses, the daughters of Lilliputian Kings and princelets, who, though provincial, affected many mannerisms. As he spoke the Ambassador forgot the two Duchesses, the Dowager-Princess Alexandra Fredorovna, the extinguished spouse of Alexandra, *née* Princess Mary of Hesse, daughter of the Grand-Duke Louis, and wife of the Grand-Duke Constantine, and the daughter of the Duke of Saxe d'Altenburg, one of the most accomplished of women of her time.

The Empress listened without interruption, but when he had finished his tirade, she said laughingly : " In the name of my beloved daughters-in-law, I thank you, Count, for your compliments, but let me assure you that my lord the late Emperor, myself, and all the Court were delighted at the happy choice of my sons, for my daughters-in-law are the joy of my life. This, of course, does not prevent the Empress Eugénie from being a delightful Sovereign." The pale Morny felt his face grow scarlet. He stammered, blurted out profuse apologies, endeavouring to explain that he did not mean to say what he had said. Then the excellent Empress chaffed him kindly, and with charming grace she helped him to extricate himself from the mire into which he had fallen. Later, he lost no chance of atoning for his mistake.

Comte de Morny was not allowed to have many idle moments. He had to choose between one of two full days on which to receive the Corps Diplomatique and the four first classes of Russian nobility who bear the title of Excellency. It is easy to understand the impression of glorious satisfaction which he must have conceived during those days, without doubt the most brilliant days in his whole career. Standing on one of the steps of the raised platform, in the attitude of a monarch receiving the homage and obeisance of the great bodies of his kingdom, he welcomed with affable dignity all those brilliant personages, so proud of

their birth, their privileges, and their rank. The Master of Ceremonies named each visitor and declaimed his title. In a few hours all the notable men of St. Petersburg had bowed before him. Apart from the official demonstrations to which he was bidden with Lord Granville and Prince Esterhazy, Morny was the recipient of many attentions and special favours. At Court the sacrosanct formalities of etiquette, so drastic in Russia, were ignored so that he might enjoy more comfort—in fact, they were almost abrogated. Thus he was allowed to pay his respects to the Grand-Dukes and Grand-Duchesses in the Palace of Peterhof instead of being compelled, according to custom, to visit them in turn in their respective palaces. The French Ambassador enjoyed a real prestige, which was enhanced by the display of military pomp. He had the escort of a military Commander-in-Chief. It was by no means uncommon to see the cortège of His Excellency the Ambassador-Extraordinary of France driving along the Newski Prospective on his way to the Emperor. A legion of officers, chosen expressly by the Minister of War, rode as his Aides-de-Camp beside his state carriage. Their names and titles were: Generals Lebœuf, of the Artillery; Froissart, of the Engineers; and Dumont, of the Infantry — they had all fought in the Crimean Campaign; Lieutenant-Colonel Reille, eldest son of the Field-Marshal; Staff-Captain Piquevale; Prince Paul de Bauffremont, Captain of the 8th

Lancers; Comte d'Espeuilles, Lieutenant of the 6th Hussars; and the Marquis de Gallifet, Lieutenant in the Guides.*

So much gold braid and so many epaulettes glittered with such effulgence that certain people were not only dazzled, but felt awkward at the sight of this Ambassador's retinue. General Fleury, for instance, who had a professional dislike of any subordination of the military to the civil element, was not slow to criticize this plethora of officers dancing attendance upon an Ambassador, however extraordinary he might be. Notwithstanding these caustic remarks, the tone of the French Mission was decidedly enhanced by its military element, and the Tzar witnessed with pleasure the doings of this little Ambassadorial Court.

The great display of the Duc de Morny, the good form and luxury which was noticeable in the smallest details of his surroundings, the beauty of his equipages, and the interest awakened by his Picture Gallery, which had reached Petersburg at the same time as himself, formed the general subject of conversation in the Imperial City. Cardinal de Rohan in Rome, the Duc de la Rochefou-

* The diplomatic staff was composed of Charles Baudin, first secretary, and Viscounts de Lespine and Simeon, secretaries; the Marquis de Piennes, the Marquis de Sayve, the Duc de Gramont-Caderousse, the Marquis de Courtavel, the Baron d'Hunolstein, the Marquis de Munsabré, attachés. Count de Murat, secretary of the Corps Législatif, also accompanied the President in his official capacity.

cauld-Doudeauville in London—those great lords of diplomacy had never displayed more magnificence. All Russian society had its eyes fixed upon the Woronzoff Palace.

The departure for Moscow was near at hand. It was in the old capital of Russia that the sacred Coronation of Alexander II. was to take place. The Imperial insignia required for the ritual of the ceremony were sent from the Winter Palace, accompanied by the chief officers of the Empire. The diamond collar of St. Andrew was to be worn by the Empress. The Standard, the Seal, and Sword of State of the Emperor ; the heavy mantles of the Tzar and Tzarina ; the sceptre and the two crowns—proud attributes of power—were conveyed to the special train in ten state coaches, each drawn by six horses, and accompanied by an escort of two squadrons of Gentlemen of the Guard.

The Coronation festivals had begun. A huge concourse of subjects, hailing from European and Asiatic Russias, filled the avenues of the Holy City, whose crown consists of the hundred cupolas of the Kremlin. The French Ambassador had taken two palaces. The larger one, the Korsakoff Palace, was intended for the use of the general officers and other members of the Mission, and also for reception purposes ; the smaller, Kukmanoff Palace, became his private residence. The representatives of England and Austro-Hungary had also retained sumptuous residences. Moscow was in a state of extraordinary animation.

On the morning of the great day the peals of three hundred churches rang forth in unison with the powerful roar of the cannon, and joyously rent the air. The Cathedral of the Assumption, the iconostasis of which is a five-storied wall of gilt-silver, with carved figures on each story, has been compared to a dazzling palace of gold. On this occasion it was bathed in radiant light, and ready to receive the Sovereigns and their gorgeous retinue. The diplomatic Missions had all met at the French Embassy, in order to go in a body to the Kremlin Palace. The equipages vied in brilliancy. That of Lord Granville is described by Comte de Murat as a perfect specimen of an English turn-out. Profuse Austrian luxury was lavished upon the state coach of Prince Esterhazy, the Hungarian magnate, whose uniform was literally studded with diamonds and precious pearls. The Duc de Morny's carriage was drawn by six English thoroughbreds. It had gilt wheels and six bevelled windows, and was a masterpiece in its way. His men wore powdered wigs and white-and-gold liveries. In the interior of the cathedral the religious ceremony was invested with all the majesty and forms of visual exaltation imaginable.

The imposing ceremonies of the Coronation were quickly followed by a series of remarkable social festivities. The Ambassadors of England, Austria, and France endeavoured to surpass one another in the gorgeous receptions and parties they gave in honour of the Emperor of Russia. The first was

given by Lord Granville, and was remarkable for the wealth displayed and the elegance of the arrangements. Supper was served upon the magnificent plate of the Duke of Devonshire—that same plate which he had brought to Moscow for the Coronation of Nicholas I., and His Grace the Duke had had the courtesy to lend it to his successor and son-in-law to enable him to do honour to the Tzar Alexander II. Lord Granville's ball was followed by that of Prince Esterhazy, the owner of a colossal fortune. Then followed the third reception—that of the French Ambassador, which was unequalled in the taste and refinement of detail displayed. Count Murat states that Morny himself supervised and directed the decoration of the rooms. A lattice-work of gold covered with medallions, foliage, and lights was laid upon a foundation of azure blue. The raised platform reserved for the Imperial Family was upholstered in light blue silk. The Court entered the drawing-rooms at ten o'clock, when the ball began. De Morny danced with the Empress, and the Tzar with Madame de Seeback, who had accepted to act that night as hostess at the French Embassy. It was observed that Their Majesties remained later than usual, thus giving the French Ambassador a flattering proof of their appreciation. A few days later Alexander II. said to one of his courtiers that the most successful ball was that given by Morny. The truth was that he had taken a great liking to him—a liking which increased

when the Court returned to Petersburg. The Tzar Alexander II. was himself a charming man, and much more favoured than his father Nicholas, who was bereft of all wit. He was easily won over by the graceful and elastic intellect of Morny. The latter was flying at high game. The fact that his journey through Russia might create a dazzling but fugitive impression was not sufficient to satisfy him, so he promptly seized the opportunity of creating friendly and enduring relations between the heir of the Throne of Ice and the Emperor of the French. The Tzar's sympathy was constantly shown to him, and he turned it to use with infinite art and subtlety. There were old and also recent wounds that had to be healed, especially such wounds which, though hidden, do more than one imagines towards fostering ill-will and sharpening ill-feeling between the Chanceries of Europe.

In Paris, Count Kisselef, the Russian Ambassador, had not yet forgotten the cool reception afforded him at the Tuileries. The Emperor had kept him waiting, and the Empress betrayed not the slightest desire to see him.

The humiliation of defeat still hung like a pall over St. Petersburg, where men and women were emotional and very susceptible. Morny, however, was to the manner born. He steered his way quite smoothly, with the deftest hand. At the same time, he informed his Minister of Foreign Affairs of all that he was doing, lest his efforts in Petersburg might be checkmated in Paris.

He wrote to Walewski: "I do not think it is good policy to show coolness to the Russians, and I should deeply regret to see the Emperor or the Empress yielding to such petty sentiments. In the first place, the English will show no gratitude towards France for doing so, and the Russians, on the other hand, will resent it deeply, because they are a particularly able nation."*

Even then he seemed to foresee and apprehend what happened in 1867, when, on the occasion of the visit of the Sovereigns to Paris, Napoleon committed the huge mistake of not understanding, or not seeming to understand, the friendly intentions —nay, the wish for an alliance—which Alexander II. and his Minister Gortschakoff were anxious to express. "Russia to-day gives herself body and soul to us. If we treat her with contempt, she will retire bearing us much ill-will for rejecting her advances."†

He carefully analyzed the double game played by England, the object of which was, quite naturally, to serve British interests. He wrote as follows to the same Minister: "Let me foretell the future to you. England's treatment of the Russians seems rough and very brutal, but underhand she is sending pleasant messages over here, and promises to resume old relations which existed between her and Russia as soon as the existing difficulties are overcome. For Heaven's sake, let

* Letter of November 25, 1856.

† Letter to Verisqui.

us not be duped! We must try to act with and to treat both countries according to their merits, otherwise I predict that within two years we shall not be on good terms with England, and we shall have fallen out with Russia."

Though Morny did not miss a ball or a Court function, he lost no chance of winning the confidence of the Russian Government. The man of the world sensibly helped the close, clever game of the statesmen. He had resumed the policy of the Duke de Richelieu, and would have wished to impose it upon Napoleonic diplomatists. It was the same policy adopted since under the Third Republic by the Decazes and the Hanotaux, the effective safeguard of France against another invasion.*

The organic sympathy which exists between the French and Russian nations was patent to him then. In 1853, during the first days of the Empire, he had already expressed his views in that sense. Comte de Nesselrode, the Minister for Foreign Affairs for Nicholas I., wrote then to Kisselef the Ambassador, praising the wisdom and the foresight of Morny. De Morny had intervened with much prudence and foresight in a very thorny question—viz., the recognition of the French Empire by the Powers at a moment when it very nearly reached an acute phase. He never altered

* In 1845 Alexander I. had saved France from dismemberment, and Alexander II. was to preserve her from an unjust aggression in 1875 on the part of the German Empire.

his views. He remained faithful to the idea—nay, the conviction—that there should exist between France and Russia as close an alliance as possible. He and the Chancellor Gortschakoff willingly reminded their hearers that Napoleon I. only reached the zenith of his power when he effected an alliance with Alexander I. Like Gortschakoff, he endeavoured to make the diplomatists of the Quai d'Orsay understand that, in order to inspire confidence without, it was necessary to adopt a frank attitude, a line of conduct without turns or zigzags, to persevere in the one direction, and to set their course towards Russia, because an understanding with the great Northern Power would alone prevent all coalitions against France. He wrote this to Napoleon, and repeated it in every shape and form to his "Dear Emperor," who still coquetted with England, where he was represented by Fialin de Persigny in a somewhat blundering manner.*

* Morny was never a warm friend of Persigny, and he certainly did not spare him in the letters he wrote from St. Petersburg to the Emperor or to the Foreign Minister. This is easily proved by the following lines, which we take from his diplomatic message of November 29, 1856: "Unfortunately, the greatest lever which the English Minister possesses against the French Government is its Ambassador of his Court. I have had access here to reports coming from England, from Paris, and from Compiègne, and I have seen in them all the disastrous effect produced by the language of Persigny. He is jeopardizing the dignity of his Emperor and the respect due to us all. Such a position cannot long endure without grave danger. Persigny is petted in England, while you are attacked and calumniated. He is upholding a policy

No doubt could be entertained as to his political tendencies. He was an avowed Russophile, as proved by all his letters, which we have perused page by page.

In one of them he quoted the Tzar as follows: "Russia should have never quarrelled with France, who is her national ally for a thousand reasons." He proceeded to enumerate the chief reasons, every one of which was justified by the course of successive events.

He concluded thus: "It is my conviction that it is much easier for us to be on good terms with Russia than with Germany, who hates us from the bottom of her heart."*

His foresight had been sharpened during his journey across Germany on his way to Petersburg. He was then able to gauge the ambition of the Prussians, and the forces which were being prepared in the ancient electorate of Brandeburg.

He devoted the few hours he could spare away from the whirlwind of the Court to private correspondence with the Emperor upon subjects the gravity of which impressed him more than it did his brother. At times he would drop the official

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diametrically opposed to ours without semblance of right on his side. All this creates a situation abnormal, antihierarchical, and intolerable. It is the talk of all Europe."

* Mérimée threw out the following reflection in a letter dated May 27, 1859: "I know nothing about Prussia save that the blind fury of the Francophobes is growing more acute each day."

tone and address his Sovereign in affectionate and familiar terms, which no other Ambassador could have used, but which were justified in his case, owing to the secret relationship that existed between him and Napoleon III. "I ask you, my good Emperor, to place my respectful devotion at the feet of the Empress. Would she like any fox-skins? I know that you are in good health, and that Plombières has done you good. I rejoice to know it, but I feel I have been separated from you for a long time, so let me embrace you with all my heart."

When this effusion had spent itself, he returned to grave and serious language. He was in no way a sentimental politician, for his brain was not shaped for sentimentalism of any sort, and he therefore avoided all bathos. At that time there happened to be in Europe a nation led with the knout like a horde of barbarians, trampled by the hoofs of the Cossacks' horses, crushed in the unequal struggle between the rights of conscience and those of brute force. The soul of the world had been moved to its depths by the sight of this nation's sufferings. France shuddered with pity, for France was ever the protectress of this nation in mourning. A rising there was near at hand—a rising that would become a war, a merciless war. It was high time to choose sides, to decide between an opportune alliance and barren sympathies. Morny only indulged in the luxury of principles when his interests and those of his friends or of

his cause were thoroughly safeguarded. He did not hesitate a moment. He wrote to Napoleon: "Russia has grave fears concerning Poland. Is it not evident to every statesman that as long as France and Russia are allied Poland cannot think of rising, and that it is contrary to our interests to encourage her rebellious spirit?" (Moscow, September 15, 1856).

He lacked generosity, justice, and humanity, but political realities proved that he was materially right. In later years, when France was deprived of the chastening influence of Morny, the Polish rebellion broke out. The European Governments had to reckon with it, and France could not remain a disinterested onlooker. Bismarck knew how to seize his opportunity. By means of a special Convention he approached Russia, and offered the moral support of the Prussian Government, with a view to stifling the Polish rising of 1863. Thus he gained the goodwill of the Cabinet of St. Petersburg, and we know what good use he made of it during the dark days of the history of France, who at this time had cut herself adrift from Russia. Petersburg was well aware of Morny's views on the Polish question, and was deeply grateful to him. While his mission lasted in St. Petersburg, he was undoubtedly seconded by exceptional circumstances. He was a conciliating intermediary between the two Emperors, in a state of grace with both, serving the one and deftly handling the other. Thus he was able to

promote the interests of his country with an assurance and an amount of self-possession which were reflected in a remarkable way in the dignity of his language and in his literary and conversational commerce. He discarded all obsequious formulas in which is usually couched the epistolary conversation of an Ambassador who at a distance is endeavouring to elicit the wishes of his Sovereign. He transmitted to the Emperor of the French his comments and his advice in a firm and independent tone, quite uncommon to the courtier. He would write thus :

" My dear Emperor,

" This is the position of affairs, and under the circumstances this is what should be done. It would be sheer madness to act otherwise. . . ."

Morny always wrote and spoke to Napoleon III. with the greatest freedom. A proof of this is afforded us in his unpublished letters. When the Murats wanted to have the title of Highness bestowed upon them, he opposed their wish tooth and nail. With equal energy did he combat the conferring of the great name and coat of arms of the Montmorency family, which was about to become extinct, upon Adalbert de Périgord. He resented the fact that Napoleon III. was about to give this Royalist title to a Bonapartist family, and that, merely to please the Duchesse de Valençay. Foregoing all circumlocutions, he

wrote to him whom he respected but did not fear :*

"My dear Emperor,

"Do not by this foolish act parody the gravest faults of Napoleon I. . . ."†

In Russia the sacred person of the Tzar is surrounded by an almost religious ceremonial. Morny did not think it necessary, however, to refrain from presenting matters to him in their true light, not being a Russian subject. His perfect frankness from the onset favourably impressed the soul and intelligence of Alexander II.

During the many private conversations which they had it is quite certain that the moral superiority was never on the side of the all-powerful monarch. Little by little the Emperor of all the Russias yielded unwittingly to the hypnotic influence of Morny's genius, and was won over to him hand and foot. With the French nobleman he became friendly, intimate, expansive. "Do not

* The Marquis de Castelbajac, French Ambassador at Petersburg, on the eve of the Crimean War did not adopt the same spirit of independence with the Tzar Nicholas. He never contradicted him, but applauded everything he did and said, which did not prevent the shots from being fired.

† The Emperor had not even waited for the death of the Prince of Luxembourg, the last surviving male of the ancient house of Mortmorency. Prince de Bauffremont Courtenay, the eldest son of the eldest daughter of the Duc de Montmorency, warmly opposed the Emperor's act, and actually applied to the courts for an injunction, thus starting long and very painful litigation.

PRINCESS PAULINE OF METTERNICH-SANDOR

A. DOUMENQ

fail to tell Napoleon," he said, " that he can count upon my friendship, and that I shall never forget the manner in which he has acted towards me. I only wish from the bottom of my heart that I may some day have the opportunity of proving this."*

Morny was now listened to by the master and his counsellors. He had found in Gortschakoff a man quite ready to adopt that high policy in which their views coincided. The diplomatic concessions and the politeness shown by the Russian Government to France were dictated in a measure by personal considerations, to which Morny's attention was drawn, as will be seen in the following extract from a letter of the Russian statesman to the successful negotiator :

" You will see how anxious we are to be agreeable to you, and to place all designs and plans favourable to France under your direct influence and supervision. We would have the world know that such concessions as we grant to your country are intimately connected with yourself."

He had wielded considerable influence upon one and all. His dinners, his receptions, and his diplomatic interviews achieved ever-increasing success. In a word, he succeeded in everything. Each day the Tzar became more intimate and more friendly with him, and it was not without sadness that the autocrat witnessed the first

* He was reminded of these words in 1870, when it was too late to recall them.

preparations for the departure of the French statesman. He grasped him frequently by the hand during their last interviews, and said to him :

" Is it true that I must soon lose you ? If so, it will cause me much pain. All my family—and, indeed, everyone—will regret your departure. Cannot you ask the Emperor Napoleon to arrange matters so that you can remain with us ?"

" Sire, I have many interests which recall me to Paris, but I shall inform my Sovereign of the flattering confidence which Your Majesty is good enough to repose in me, and if he thinks that I can serve him here better than in France, I shall sacrifice private interests and return."

He had fully justified all the hopes which had been conceived of him. He had succeeded in obtaining from the Emperor Alexander a satisfactory solution of all existing difficulties, and, as a result, Napoleon III. and his diplomacy were greatly enhanced in the opinion of Europe. There is little doubt that his diplomatic mission would have borne better fruit, and contributed more surely towards averting future complications if the particular diplomacy of the Emperor's Cabinet had not killed by its vacillation the germs which had been so cleverly sown. Was Morny fully appreciated after this successful campaign, in which he had rendered services that were not sustained with sufficient vigour to be made profitable to France and to the French Government ? Alas ! no. His ideas were as precise and as

logical as those of Napoleon were obscure and variable.* He would have been glad to remain permanently at a Court where he was appreciated, loved, and spoilt. He let this be known without saying so openly. But at home they pretended not to understand him, and he was recalled. He had many private matters to put in order, and on his return he proceeded to wind up a somewhat complicated past.† He returned to France and to the Corps Législatif somewhat disillusioned, though he brought back with him charming recollections, the elements of a new existence, and his collection of pictures, the value of which he had increased by judicious methods.‡ He had satisfied the wish of his life by marrying a noble and beautiful young woman at the Court of Russia.

* On November 29, 1863, he wrote again to Prince Gortschakoff:

"My dear Prince,

"Your letter caused me both pleasure and pain—pleasure because of its personal references to me, and pain for that which concerns the relations between our two countries. . . ."

† His complications were both monetary and sentimental. While he was dazzling St. Petersburg with the splendour of his reception, there were not a few in Paris who wondered what would be the end of the Great Central business. Viel-Castel, that prince of gossips, declared that Morny would not return from the Russian capital because "his dealings and jobbings with the Great Central shares had earned him a few millions and ruined the shareholders" (March 7, 1858).

‡ Referring to this picture-gallery, Sir Robert Peel said, with much wit and a little spite, that the true story of the bargains and picture dealings at the Court of Russia could have provided food for Kings and rustics alike.

CHAPTER VII

MORNY, SOCIETY, AND WOMEN

How the society man became a politician and a diplomatist—A pleasant retrospect into the past—A sketch of the fashionable salons under the constitutional monarchy—Madame Boscari de Villeplaine—A pretty anecdote—Auguste de Morny meets a mysterious domino at the Opera—An unbroken series of festivities—The Empire—Morny and his imitators—His physical and moral portrait, as he was in 1855—Society at that period—Stories concerning society women and gambling—Receptions, fancy-dress balls, and other social functions—An amusing picture of Russian aristocracy in Paris between 1856 and 1860—The important part played by women in the life and career of Morny—Some fragments of his private correspondence—De Morny marries—Preliminary steps taken to ensure this marriage—A true relation of what happened between Paris and Petersburg—How many incidents connected with it affected the Emperor himself—Comte and Comtesse de Morny's return to France—A faithful portrait of Sophia Troubetzkoï, Comtesse de Morny—Some intimate pages.

The daily sittings of the Corps Législatif and the daily battles waged upon the Stock Exchange in no way decreased Morny's love for society.

From the early days of Louis-Philippe he had been a night-bird. At that time the fashionable salons were all agog concerning a fair young man who, thanks to his connections, belonged to every

set and every club, and who was the living image of the monarch. All eyes were upon him. Society beckoned to him, but did not enslave him. He was to be seen everywhere—at receptions, in the wings of the Opera, on the Turf, and at theatres. Such were his haunts pending the day when he was to launch his bark upon the stormy waters of politics.

The influence of Madame de Souza had afforded him an *entrée* to many charming houses, in which boredom was religiously tabooed.

Among them was the salon of Madame Boscari de Villeplaine, a fashionable circle towards the end of the Restoration period and during the greater part of the July monarchy.

Among many who foregathered there were Duc Pasquier, an acute observer and a man so able, so clever, that through his long career he failed to beget the sympathy of his fellow-men; Major Fraser, an extraordinary original, whose adventurous and mysterious life was devoted to sport and to transcendent study, whose quaint and simple manners and eccentric dress were a source of intrigue to a whole generation of Parisians; Viennet, a strong partisan of the younger branch as soon as the elder branch had been exiled; Vatout—the excellent and indispensable Vatout—a replica of Louis-Philippe, and that for very natural reasons;* Comte Horace de

* Vatout was a natural son of Philippe-Égalité, and therefore a brother of Louis-Philippe.

Viel-Castel, who was beginning to trim his sails; Marquis de Boissy, a witty fellow whose puns and epigrams were quoted everywhere; Dr. Véron, about to become a man of importance, but who had not yet done so—he was chiefly engaged in showing himself at the Opera and the Museum, where he aired his ridiculous title of "Medical Inspector" of the Louvre pictures;* General de Flahaut—Charles de Flahaut—whose intimate relations with Talleyrand had earned for him the reputation of being a great statesman.

The ladies who frequented this salon included many foreigners of distinction, as well known by their brilliant titles as by their personal wit and intelligence. Such were Princesse de Lieven, Comtesse d'Apponyi, the wife of the Austrian Ambassador, and Princesse de Signe. There were also Marchionesses of ancient lineage, Empire Duchesses, and courtesy Countesses, so designated in Italy when they happened to be mere adventuresses in heraldry. Whatever their origin might have been, they all commingled pleasantly, and nobly bore their coronets, whether they were true or false ones.

Such a salon was bound to prove attractive to youth, the more so when we remember that it had been christened Mahomet's Paradise, owing to the number and diversity of beautiful women whom Madame de Villeplaine had brought to-

* Among other sinecures, that of Inspector of Wigs had been created in these auspicious times.

gether in her mansion of the Place Vendôme. One of them collected a large assortment of souvenirs, in which Comte de Morny was certainly not forgotten. He was on the best of terms with most of these lovely women since a certain occurrence, the details of which we have found in the charming Memoirs of that delightful but not quite reliable *raconteuse*, the Comtesse de Bassonville.

One of Madame Boscari's friends was in the habit of employing a clever dressmaker, who on other days of the week used to work for another woman of fashion.

One morning the first lady overheard a conversation between the seamstress and her maid. She learnt that the servants of the other lady had bored holes in the partition of her mistress's room, and had thus witnessed certain occurrences the nature of which it is unnecessary to analyze. Though by no means a purist, she felt greatly incensed at what she had heard, and decided to inform the victim of this abuse of confidence of the dangerous plight in which she had been placed. How could this be done ? She was still most perplexed over this matter as she stepped one night into the fancy-dress ball of the Opera, wearing a domino and a velvet mask. There she met Comte de Morny, and as he was alone in the *foyer*, she linked her arm in his, and told him she wanted him to help a woman, and that she was sure he would afford her his chivalrous aid. She only told him half the truth, and thus

whipped his curiosity, in the hope that he would be all the more eager to accomplish his self-imposed task. He waxed inquisitive, and implored of her to tell him all.

"Listen," she said: "I will repeat word for word what I have heard, although the subject is hardly one which commends itself to the lips of a woman; but I will do so on condition only that the principal fact in this scandalous business is certified correct. In other words, I want to be sure that these treacherous peep-holes were really bored. Make sure of this, and when you have ascertained it come to Madame de Villeplaine's ball next Friday. Wear a red camellia in your buttonhole, and I will make a sign to you by which you will recognize me. We can sit together, and I will tell you the whole story."

Upon this they parted. The following Friday saw Morny in the ballroom wearing a huge red camellia, and intently awaiting the signal which never came. She had pledged her word of honour that she would keep the appointment, but as she belonged to a sex that is never bound by promises, however sacred, she remained in hiding, having attained her end. She had told all her young friends, however, of De Morny's mission, and they surrounded him, eyed him, and smiled at him as he passed to and fro wearing his beautiful flower, asking them all in turn, "Which of you has been with me at the Opera?" He gathered no information upon the subject on that or on suc-

ceeding days, but he did not lose courage, and these gallant skirmishes lasted all through the winter season. He hoped that so much patience might eventually be rewarded.

He eventually forsook the salon of Madame de Villeplaine for that of Comtesse Lehon, where his ambition, social and political, could be better served. Society afforded him the warmest welcome and christened him "The Peach," without the slightest irony. The lions, the cubs of society, and the dandies paid homage to him. They were proud to reckon him as one of themselves, though he did not admit that he was one of them. He was carried away by a turmoil of activity, in which every human passion found play. He was soon equipped with an industrial record, with a past as a bold speculator and a successful politician. All the while he continued to satisfy his frivolous tastes in the most select circles. Such circles still existed, though there were not a few who said that since the death of Madame de Vaudemont there were no more men or women of distinction left under the reign of Louis-Philippe.

Through all the political revolutions which he witnessed or took part in, in the midst of the many changes of men and conditions, Morny never thought it wise to renounce the happy practice of the teachings of his youth. When he reached the summit of power, he reigned under the shadow of the Emperor, and with almost as much power as did

the Emperor himself. He had given ample proof that he was a man of action, but that was no reason why he should cease to be a man of fashion.

This he remained until the end. The names of his horses were mentioned by the somewhat mixed aristocracy which frequented the Bois, theatres, and the racecourse. Such as he was in the days of his daring youth, when, with Vicomte d'Alton-Shée or Montguyon, he flitted from one boudoir to another, upon the fringe of a society more or less besmirched, such he remained in the heydays of the Empire, living every hour of his life with a dignified and nonchalant air. As he grew in years and in importance, he remained faithful to his own likeness, and he had no cause to complain of this when in society he found himself surrounded and pressed hard by its most charming and seductive members. The young and pretty women knew him to be an expert, and for his sake they repeated the little comedies of winks and smiles and loving gazes which they played in honour of his crowned brother. "Lucky Morny, lucky birth!" murmured a foreign Princess, as she watched him flitting across a salon with calm and satisfied assurance. He had no illusions and remained what he had been as the leader of high life—a man full of indulgence towards himself and towards others. Quite elastic upon questions of principles—for the simple reason that he possessed none—a sceptic, he was inclined to consider that in this world there were

only feigned virtues and hidden vices. He therefore took part in the show as a dilettante, without love, without hatred. Vulgarity and impropriety could alone rouse his indignation. He avoided them as he would dirt, and could find no excuse for those who tolerated them. So long as appearances were respected and people remained correct in their attitude, he forgave everything. At a period when morality was in very low water, it was neither prudent nor sensible to be too captious about the moral value of people possessing titles, social privileges, or acquired wealth. He was adopted as their model by many Parisians, and by foreigners who wanted to be Parisian. They copied his gestures, his walk, his general appearance. Even his accent, his intonations, which conveyed studied simplicity and a distant contempt for everything, were scrupulously imitated. Most of his friends and followers adopted his style of throwing off an answer in that terse and somewhat bored manner which he always assumed in certain circles. His apparent lethargy conveyed the impression that this aristocrat was anxious to abandon the right of speech to the plutocrats or democrats who surrounded him. "Too tired to speak, too bored to live," was the studied impression created by him and copied by his admirers.

From the year 1851, Morny had met everyone worth knowing in the political, theatrical, literary,

and financial worlds. The latter is, of course, indispensable if one would enjoy life in any sphere. His tastes led him to prefer those social circles which were most refined, but he consented also to have commerce with middle-class folk possessed of great wealth. Interested motives caused him to show himself in financial houses which could help him in his schemes. He was endowed with so much acuteness and common-sense that he knew exactly the right tone to assume in such circles. There he affected to be a good fellow with no false pride, and as a consequence the bankers and business men felt quite at their ease in his company. He was not the same man everywhere. There were certain salons in which his wit and brains were much admired, but in which his pride was severely censured. In such circles he remembered Queen Hortense too vividly. With Stock Exchange folk, business men, and company promoters he discarded all haughty mannerisms. He treated them with bonhomie, and partook of their hospitality in good-fellowship. There were occasions, however, when his sense of delicacy was severely punished by the mediocrity of certain persons, or the vulgarity of certain procedures. On such occasions the haughty nobleman that he was soon asserted himself as such by the way in which he called the delinquents to order.

He was dining on one occasion with a banker of the tribe of Jacob, whose huge fortune had not contributed to decrease the hugeness of his natural

vulgarity. The service proceeded on proper lines save for one detail. The host was in the habit of drinking a " Léoville " of a special vintage, and at a given time the butler had to produce this special bottle from its hiding-place, and pour out its contents for his master. Having done this, he was supposed to hide it once more, while the guests were being served to inferior wine. Morny had heard of all this, and decided to give his host a lesson in politeness. As the wine butler approached him with two bottles, and eagerly said, " Branne-Mouton or Ermitage, sir ?" Morny replied, pointing to the hiding-place of the famous brand: " I prefer some Léoville." He said it so that his host might hear him. The *maître d'hôtel* looked distressfully at his master, who, recognizing the awkwardness of his position, decided to make the best of it. " Serve Monsieur le Comte the wine he prefers." The precious nectar was produced, and poured out solemnly drop by drop. The upstart watched the nobleman, eager to note the impression made upon him by the precious liquid. With sublime indifference, Morny emptied the contents of the claret-glass into a tumbler, filled it with water, and resumed his conversation with his neighbour. Such was the lesson inflicted upon Dives by the contemptuous aristocrat.*

* Morny did not always have the last word with his financial friends. He was pressed for money on one occasion, and came to the house of Rothschild, where the mighty Baron received him somewhat cavalierly.

" Take a chair, sir," said the banker.

Morny was always at his ease, whatever circle he happened to be in, but he only breathed freely in the purified atmosphere of society. We use the word "purified" with reference to the wit and manners of the élite. He was prone to forsake it now and again for the wings and side-tracks of semi-society. Everywhere he exercised a personal fascination which none could resist. The noble Dowager once complained to her son "that she had grown tired of listening to his unstinted praise of Comte de Morny."

"I never want to see this man," she said, in tones of defiance. She was unable, however, to avoid a chance meeting in a salon which they both frequented. Morny was well aware of her feelings towards him, and endeavoured to dispel them as best he could. He met with complete success, inasmuch as he spent the whole evening with her. The next day the lady's son asked her what she thought of Morny, whereupon she replied in a semi-bitter tone: "I have invited him to dinner."

He always preferred the company of women to that of men; he found it more restful and more appreciative of his talents and education. When compelled to leave the ladies, he invariably betrayed his displeasure until such moment that he could join them again. In the early days of the

"Do you know who I am?" replied the offended statesman. "You are speaking to Comte de Morny."

"Monsieur le Comte de Morny," answered Rothschild in most respectful tones, "will you please take two chairs."

THE DUC DE MORNY AND HIS DAUGHTER

Empire he constantly visited the house of Laffitte, the banker, whose sisters-in-law were as pretty as they were witty. He was sitting with one of them after supper on one occasion, when he was invited to join the gambling-table. He asked to be excused, but the gamblers would not hear of it.

"Do come and take a hand: madame will surely allow you to do so."

"You insist upon it; if so, I shall very soon comply with your wish."

He reached the card-room with rapid strides, and when asked what his game was, he replied: "The red and the black: it is the quickest game."

"What stakes are you playing?"

"Four hundred pounds a coup," was Morny's answer.

The partners looked at one another. They were not prepared for such high stakes. Laffitte, the host, came to the rescue, and the bet was held. The cards flew round, and Morny stopped at the red. Black turned up.

"So much the better," said Morny, as he rose from the table.

"Won't you have your revenge?" they said to him.

"Be it so. I'll play four hundred on the black, then." A red turned up. "Now, gentlemen, I hope you are satisfied; I am glad that I can go back and chat in peace." And leaving eight hundred pounds upon the table, he returned to the ladies' company. He enjoyed their chat, their grace and

coquettish airs, and was strongly opposed to the prevailing tendencies of having two societies instead of one—that of the men in the smoking-room or card-room, and that of the ladies, compelled to remain alone, like the captive women of a harem, gossiping, "musicking," and criticizing one another by looks, the while their lords and masters forgot their very existence.

He knew how to retire from the company of women, and would come back to the men and assert himself in their midst by methods different from those which he adopted with the charmers of the weaker sex. Men considered him both strong and refined when he condescended to forgo his airs of boredom, to finish his sentences, and to express himself with that force and brilliancy which he possessed in a marked degree. He was an excellent conversationalist, whose sayings were original and unprepared. He could discern qualities in those conversing with him which they had not always suspected themselves. He drew their attention to them without vile flattery, but in such a manner that they left him under the spell of his charm, and convinced that they were far better men than they had ever dreamt. One of his peculiarities as a conversationalist was the great pleasure which he took in ignoring the usual forms of conversation. He treated grave questions with apparent levity, and spoke of trivial subjects with ponderous gravity. Morny did not always wear that air of excessive boredom

which was one of his characteristic features. He was often reproached, however, for the affectation with which he referred, in time and out of time, to the conventions of good form, and for his tendency to give pedantic lessons of language and behaviour.

This was a strange mania of his, which made him act and speak like those men who know nothing in the morning, learn something in the afternoon, and are on tenterhooks to display their knowledge in the evening. As a man of the world he was inferior in this to Comte d'Orsay, though he was his superior in many other matters, among others in his discreet behaviour towards woman.* When he chose, he could throw off apparent reserve, which lent a freezing manner to the public man. He was always glad to throw off the mask

* The Duchesse de Dino relates an incident which is not to the credit of the dandy hero. She wrote it on February 20, 1824. "There is a very nasty story abroad concerning Alfred d'Orsay. Sir Willoughby Cotton wrote two letters the same day from Brighton. The one was addressed to Comte d'Orsay, the other to Lady Fitzroy Somerset. He put the letters in the wrong envelopes, and D'Orsay received the one meant for Lady Somerset. It began with the words 'Dear Lady Fitzroy'; but instead of closing it as soon as he discovered his mistake, D'Orsay read it from cover to cover. It contained a lot of Brighton gossip, a good deal of which was at the expense of Lady Tullamore and her friends, and also a rather unpleasant story concerning D'Orsay himself. He proceeded forthwith to the club, where he read the whole letter; he then addressed it to Lord Tullamore, and several duels were nearly fought as a result of his indiscretion. The culprit has left suddenly for Paris, and things have been glossed over for the sake of the ladies, but the whole odium of the affair rests upon Monsieur d'Orsay."

which he wore in society, and to resume his freedom of expression and mind, away from a centre where was all deceit, dissimulation, and disguise. When he allowed himself to be himself, his charms were irresistible. Somewhat haughty, perhaps, but not of that haughtiness which invests authoritative and solemn men, he preserved great dignity when dealing with courtiers; but he was simple with the simple, good to those who served him kindly, and affable towards the humble and the destitute. The following anecdotes afford ample proof of this. They were related to us by the Marquis de Charnacé, who was a witness of the incidents related :

A small and select circle was discussing an event which had occurred the previous day at the house of Princesse de Metternich. The circle consisted of the hostess, the Duchesse de Bassano, Madame de Sancy-Parabère, Mérimée, Morny, and Charnacé.

The fancy-dress balls given by the Austro-Hungarian Ambassadress in her mansion in the Rue de Varennes were much sought after, because none could attend them unless honoured by a personal invitation. The Princess did not acquiesce to all the applications, and upon this point her instructions to her secretaries were formal. All the guests had to make themselves known upon their arrival. The men were received by her with their masks off, while the ladies came in dominoes, but had to raise their hoods upon

reaching the first drawing-room, where they were received by their hostess. By some extraordinary circumstance a tall, elegant man, bearing the romantic name of the Marquis de Saffray, obtained admission to one of these functions. Was he a Marquis ? We dare not vouch for it. One thing was certain—that he held a very modest position as clerk in the Ministry of the Interior. He was an eccentric, a maniac, an ardent reader of a paper founded by Henri de Pène, called *La Gazette des Étrangers*. It was the *Gaulois* of the time, and published accounts of all society functions. The Home Office clerk apparently concluded that the mere fact of subscribing to the *Gazette* conferred upon him the entrée to all the houses whose receptions were chronicled.

This mad idea was the cause of Monsieur de Saffray's presence in the salons of Princesse de Metternich.

He had barely passed the threshold of the first drawing-room when the Princess scanned him carefully, and called one of the attachés, to whom she said :

" Who is that gentleman standing there by the palm-tree ? Will you please ask him what his name is, and whether he has been invited ?"

The attaché, complying with his instructions, approached the stranger.

" To whom have I the honour of speaking ?"

" To the Marquis de Saffray, sir."

" You have no doubt received an invitation ?"

"Well, not exactly, but I read an announcement of this function in *La Gazette.*"

"I am afraid that is not sufficient, sir."

He waited, affording the stranger a chance to take his departure.

"Well, sir." Another short pause, and, pointing to the door, he repeated: "Well, sir."

The gesture was eloquent, and the poor Marquis found himself in the street, reflecting upon the vanities of this world.

The Duchesse de Bassano, who was not a brilliant wit, but an excellent woman of real distinction, thought that this execution was somewhat summary and unduly harsh.

"Do you not share my views?" she inquired of her guests.

"For my part," said Morny, "I would not have pained my friend for the world."

"Your friend!" they all exclaimed.

"It is true that our relations have always been silent ones, but he is useful to me in his own way. You know that my wife pays little notice to my Deputies, but this poor fellow never misses one of my At Homes, and, without being invited, he looks after my Parliamentary guests, shows them my pictures and works of art, and does the honours of my house. As one has to pass through the salon to reach the reception-rooms, he stands on its threshold, attentive and polite. The members of the Corps Législatif stop before an important canvas: he tells them its origin, its value,

the price I paid for it, and the date on which I purchased it. I remember on one occasion standing beside him while he quoted figures and facts to Monsieur de Chavagie, the Member for Maine-et-Loire.

" ' Are you quite certain ?' I asked.

" ' Absolutely, Monsieur le Duc. This is a picture that I have assiduously followed for the past thirty years.'

" My friend never spoke to me till one night, when he did so in the following terms :

" ' Monsieur le Duc, allow me to make a request of you ?'

" ' Certainly ; what is it ?'

" ' It concerns my mother. But perhaps Monsieur le Duc has not read my mother's poems.'

" ' So far I have been deprived of this pleasure.'

" ' Well, my mother is holding a reception on Tuesday next, when she will recite her verses, with piano accompaniment, in her apartment of the Rue de Clichy. Will you do us the great honour of being our guest ?'

" ' Certainly, with great pleasure.'

" That day I dined at the British Embassy in full uniform, and with the broad ribbon across my breast. At dessert I remembered the strange invitation, and, having accepted it, I decided to keep to my word.

" As soon as dinner was over, I told my coachman to drive to the address which had been given me. I ascended several flights of stairs, rang, and

was admitted to the flat, where I found five or six people peacefully seated in the drawing-room. I surmised that the crowd of guests had not yet arrived. I immediately recognized the Muse of this domestic temple—an old lady, very pale and very thin, dressed in black and wearing a strange turban. I was greatly interested by the turban, for I remembered similar ones which I had seen in my boyhood at the house of some friends of Madame de Souza.

" ' Madame, your son has spoken to me of your poems. I had to accept other invitations, but I have come to hear your poems : will you afford me that pleasure ?'

" She walked towards the piano, a small and very ancient instrument. Her thin hands, upon which she wore white mittens, glided upon the notes, from which they extracted weak sounds. She recited verses which were not at all bad, and I congratulated her heartily. As she stood up to greet a new arrival I withdrew hurriedly, and spent the remainder of the evening with the Duchesse de Persigny. Here there was no lack of guests, either as to number or quality. Under the dazzling lights my eyes were greeted by a very different sight, a sea of white shoulders covered with precious stones, while feathers and lapels adorned the heads of the assembled ladies. The men present wore a profusion of Orders. Bacciochi alone could account for sixteen of them, and at a distance he looked like the vignette of a fifteenth-

century missal. One could hardly move that evening in the spacious apartment. Among the ladies was Madame de la Moskowa's only daughter, a delightful blonde, whose fantastic nature and giddy ways stood out in bold contrast with the sullen gravity of the Duke, her husband."*

De Morny had to frequent many Paris houses, both in his official and private capacities. He could not absent himself from any of the Court functions held at the Château, as the Tuileries were termed, for his absence from Ministerial galas would have been noticed by all. The same applied to all the salons and balls.

He was one of the notable guests at the famous ball of the Duchesse d'Albe, and at the great reception of the Walewskis at the Foreign Office.

In 1909 we heard a description of this famous entertainment from the lips of the last survivor of the band of brilliant cavaliers who led the delightful quadrille of pierrots and pierrettes in the rooms of Madame Walewski—Baron Charles de Behr, whose partner was Princesse Lobanof, to whom he was tied by chains of roses, woven by a tender and lasting love. There were also present Alfred de Grote, a handsome fellow who was on the best of terms with one of the Grand Duchesses, and who danced with the hostess ; Comte Hoyos,

* It was this Duchesse de Persigny whom her friends nicknamed Lady Persington, because of her great affection for British ways, customs, and dress, since she had been French Ambassadress in London. After the Duke's death she married a poor man called Lemoine.

Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, with Mademoiselle de Rivas de Saavedra; and little Prince Georges de Croy, with Madame de Grétry, a graceful blonde much courted by the Emperor. The pretty group wore white satin costumes, with red pompons, powdered wigs, and little white pointed hats with floating red streamers. They all had white boots, and the cavaliers formed an impeccable *vis-à-vis* to the ladies, who were clad in light gauze skirts trimmed with gold lace. The dance had been executed at the *tempo di galopo*. The Emperor and the Queen of Holland were so delighted they requested that the quadrilles should be danced again; but the sensitive Princesse Lobanof looked so overcome by the cadence that she fainted, and so Baron de Behr had to support her upon his arm for the rest of the evening.

The guests included everybody who was anybody in Parisian society. It was at this ball that Comtesse Tascher de la Pagerie made her entrance borne in a chaise and followed by a cortège. The Emperor came in a black domino, which he soon replaced by a mauve one, so as to better perplex those present. The Empress herself first appeared in a black dress spangled with gold, wearing dazzling rubies and diamonds in her powdered hair; but she then retired to Madame Walewski's room, where she donned a fancy dress, which hid her identity. The Comtesse de Brigode was declared by De Morny to be a marvel of beauty, while young Mélanie de Pourtalés was described

by him as a veritable Greuze. There were many more beauties present, such as the unique and lovely Comtesse de Castiglione.

Seldom did Morny go to Prince Napoleon's save in his official character. The relations between the two brothers were much estranged towards 1853, and remained so for a long time, although the Emperor recognized the great intellect and the rare talents which made him appoint Morny to the Regency in 1859, on the eve of the War of Italy. The man behind the throne constantly visited Princesse Mathilde, because he was sure to meet personal friends at her house, and the literary protégés of La Païva; he never missed a reception or a fancy-dress ball of Princesse de Metternich, and he was a faithful guest of the Duc and Duchesse de Bassano.

He often entertained, giving balls and dinners. The splendour of a reception given by him in 1855 lingered long in the memory of those who witnessed it. It was paid for by the nation, because Morny snatched a vote in the Chamber to that effect. A throne had been erected in the Salle des Pas-Perdus, which was hung with tapestries and mirrors of great value. Here and there were statues modelled by Cruchot and wrought in iron. The courtyard and the gardens were filled with marquees; fountains played upon the lawns, and reflected a thousand dazzling lights. In this fairylike frame Deputies moved to and fro in their

blue-and-white uniforms, braided with gold and silver. The new Empress looked every inch an Empress in a dress of pink crêpe, flounced with English lace; it was covered with streamers of narcissi. She wore a hat of flowers, upon which rested her exquisite emeralds. Another Princess was dressed in a white and frothy cloud of white taffeta, covered with little bees. The skirt consisted of eleven flounces of silk tulle, trimmed with a marabout frill, and caught up on the right side with a bouquet of white bell flowers. This was the triumphant period of snow-white dresses.

In 1856 Morny held a brilliant reception in honour of Marie Christine, the Queen of Spain, whose lovely eyes had much impressed him.*

Another famous reception was given by him at the end of the Carnival of 1859. Morny had advised his guests that he wished them to adhere to the period of Louis XV. He did so in order to forestall the discrepancies and flights of imagination which are often put into effect at the most aristocratic fancy-dress balls. Everyone wore powdered hair, and soon the atmosphere became laden with vague white clouds which covered the ground. The host, referring to it, said that if his guests had not danced upon a volcano, they certainly had upon powder.

Other receptions of De Morny were of a much

* The beauty of the Queen's eyes was proverbial, but only her head was a cause of admiration, because she was disfigured by the enormity of her body.

more intimate character. At such he would ask Houssaye to sing a ballad of Lulli, or Émile Augier to interpret "L'Amour nous mène," and on these occasions the chief topics of conversation were music, literature, women, and art. At stated intervals he gave official balls and receptions, attended by courtiers in red, blue, green, and claret uniforms, by officers, dandies, and their lady friends. His fancy-dress balls were likened to pictures by Valentino in a setting of Winterhalter.

The guests enjoyed a facile, indulgent amount of freedom, for their host, though irreproachable, did not impose a stiff and starched ceremonial upon his friends. As a result, many daring feats were performed, and the men closely pursued the pretty women, whether masked or unmasked.*

Among these gallants some were most enterprising, such as Colonel de Gallifet, who caused panics in the ranks of the fair dancers. Their pleasure was none the less, however, for they enjoyed life to their hearts' content. In the topsy-turvydom of certain receptions, where members of society commingled with officials, politicians, and their wives, some amusing surprises occurred. On one of these occasions Morny

* One of them, who was growing old, and therefore becoming a prude, said to a friend, concerning the receptions of De Morny and of the Duc de Bassano :

"My dear, it is not safe for us to attend them in dominoes unless we wear crinolines."

"Why not ?"

"Because the men attempt to impart their impressions too freely."

stood at the entrance of his first drawing-room, ready to receive his guests. He wore breeches and stockings. The wife of a Government engineer, just arrived from the provinces, mistook him for an usher, told him her name, and waited until he announced her. He bowed respectfully and said: "Le Duc de Morny, madame, your humble servant." The poor provincial lady blushed in confusion and went her way.

Such minor accidents did not prevent the Duke's receptions from being keenly sought after by the most refined society in Paris. He was a wonderful host and his house was splendidly managed. None better than he knew how to pair his guests so that their company was congenial to one another. This he always did, unless on official occasions, when he was not really master of the situation.

He was particularly fond of frequenting diplomatic salons and those of the Russian colony, which was so distinguished and gay under the Second Empire, especially after his marriage with a descendant of the Troubetzkoïs.

The Slavonic colony had grown in force and numbers by recent alliances, and it occupied a great deal of room in Parisian society. A bevy of pretty Polish women* were much sought after.

* Among them was the exquisitely fair muse, Madame de Kalergis (*née* Comtesse de Nesselrode), who by her second marriage became Madame de Muchanow. Her mother was Polish. She herself was an accomplished musician, much

Several of them became French by marriage, such as the Marquise de Noailles,* Princesse de Beauvau, Comtesse de Bonneval.† They had brought from their mother-country that strange charm, subtle wit, and mixture of dignity and voluptuous grace which are the heritage of Polish women, and thanks to which they are the favoured ones in every society.‡

The Russian beauties differed vastly from their Polish sisters, but they were none the less clever in the art of pleasing, thanks to means and ways which they derived from their character and education. From 1856 to 1859 the headquarters

admired by Liszt, Wagner, and Rubinstein. Adored by General Cavaignac, she was as good as she was witty. The same was said of the graceful Comtesses Beranitzka, Potoçka, and many others.

* She was first known as Laure Sweikowska. Her pretty sister was Lise, Comtesse Pzesdjetzka. They were the daughters of General Lachmann, the American, and of a mother of Polish and noble birth. They vied with each other in grace and beauty. The one lived in Paris, the other resided at Nice.

† Madame de Bonneval did not come on the scene till much later. She made her début at the last fancy-dress ball of the Duc de Morny. A bride of eighteen summers, she was dressed as Marie Antoinette, and won the heart of Parisian society at the first asking.

‡ We will make special mention of Comtesse Alfred Potoçka, a beautiful, witty, and haughty woman; of Princesse Czartoriska, full of intelligence and kindness of heart, whose famous mansion in the Rue Lambert was the rendezvous of fashionable Paris. Remarkable among all others was the most beautiful Princesse Sanguszka (*née* Princesse Lubomirzka), whose daughter Hélène never consented to marry, for secret family reasons. Though generously endowed by Nature and much admired, she refused many offers, including that of the royal Duc de Nemours.

of Russian society were the salon of the Ambassador Kisselef, a mighty nobleman with an imposing aspect, a man of infinite wit and dignity. His main object was to bring about between France and his country a condition of lasting peace and harmony. In this he was fully successful, though unable to preserve harmony in his own home. He lived apart from his wife, a daughter of the beautiful Phanariote, who was still a beautiful woman, fond of art and conversation, but fonder still of cards and heavy gambling. Gambling went on all night in her apartments in the Champs Élysées,

The honours of the Russian Embassy were done by Princesse Radziwill (*née* Princesse Ouroussow), whose sister was married to Gortschakoff, the famous Chancellor. Princesse Radziwill had also cut the Gordian knot of matrimony, and, childless, she lived apart from her husband. She was tall and elegant, capricious and haughty. In Paris she remembered the goodwill shown to her in Petersburg by the Emperor Nicholas I., who at one time had bestowed his attentions upon her. She protected Morny, whose conversation interested her vastly, and when he left for St. Petersburg she gave him letters of introduction, which proved of the greatest use to him. The attachés of the Embassy had good reason to enjoy the receptions of their Ambassador, which brought together a myriad of lovely women. Among these attachés were the brilliant Albedinsky, who be-

MARIE DE MORNY, COUNTESS DE CORSANA, WEARING THE NATIONAL DRESS OF RUSSIA

She is seated on the left of a group of Russian friends

came Governor-General of the Baltic Provinces, and married Princesse Dolgorouki, "the adored friend of Alexander II." ;* the delightful Alfred de Grote, who made many victims in Paris before returning to the banks of the Neva, where he became Grand-Master of the Court of the Winter Palace. In the same diplomatic circle there was an ugly, bitter, small, but witty man called Count Tolstoï, who was not a favourite in society. Young Prince Repnine was a great favourite. Another attaché was Jean Paschkiéwitch, who married and subsequently divorced the beautiful Mademoiselle Souchanow. She became Lady Hamilton. Pierre Troubetzkoï married Princesse Lise Belosselsky, the friend of Thiers, Rouher, Lord Palmerston, Gortschakoff, and many other political celebrities in Paris, London, and St. Petersburg. She was small, fair, and almost plain, but endowed with a pretty figure and great intelligence. She gave herself the airs of a Louis-Quinze Marquise, and her grace, her wit, and her biting repartees enabled her to become a feature of society and to play a part which helped to satisfy her insatiable self-pride. It was this same Princesse Lise Troubetzkoï who was always supposed to possess the latest secrets of every Embassy. Each time she paid a call she

* The numerous family of Dolgorouki was very united, and lost no opportunity of forwarding its own interests. Thus it acquired honours, dignities, and privileges of all sorts, but the moral influence of Madame Albedinsky was the most potent factor of its prosperity.

would produce from her belt or her muff some important message which she had just received from Lord Granville or Prince Gortschakoff. She was the Egeria of the Embassies, or reputed to be so. She stood on a par with that turbulent Princesse de Lieven, whose salon was christened by Thiers the Observatory of Europe.

One of her rivals was the witty Princesse Léonide Menschikoff (*née* Princesse Gagarine), an enlightened, almost a scientific, woman, but full of goodness and replete with grace. She was tall, fair, and rather plain, the fact of which she was well aware. Intemperate in speech, she was discreet in her friendships; frankly gallant, she was honest and reliable, spurning intrigues and petty spite. Notwithstanding certain bold sallies in her conversation and a feverish gaiety which expressed itself at times in a noisy way, she remained a great and noble lady in her actions and in her general behaviour. Immensely rich, extremely hospitable, and allied to the Princes of the Imperial Family, she spoilt De Morny, upon whom she lavished her kindness both in Paris and St. Petersburg. She ended her days at Baden.

She was loved by one and all, because of her exquisite charm and her intrinsic virtues.

Princesse Léonille Wittgenstein (*née* Princesse Bariatinsky) was a leading member of Russian society in Paris. She was the object of universal praise. Having become a Catholic, she found it difficult to reside in Russia. She spent the winter

in Paris, with her husband and her children, and the summer at Sayn Castle, near Coblentz. She was really a heavenly beauty, with blue eyes and golden tresses. She loved France well, though she became the intimate friend of William I. and of the Empress Augusta of Germany. One of her sons married the daughter of the Duc de Blacas.

The Russian pleiad would have been deprived of one of its most brilliant stars without the presence of Princesse Obolinski, whose dazzling beauty enabled her to score great victories, though she possessed but very little intelligence. The Emperor William I. sat at her feet. Her husband was reputed to be an irreproachable nobleman, but she kept him always effaced in the background. Prince and Princesse Menschikoff lived pretty much on the same footing. He was a keen sportsman, seldom seen in society, while she was ever to the fore at every social function.

Among Madame de Morny's relations were the Princesses Troubetzkoï, who had inherited the brilliant gifts of that branch of the Russian aristocracy. They were the Princesse Woronzow, known for her wit, her talent, and her enormous wealth; her sister, Comtesse de Ribeaupierre, whose nature was as beautiful as her features; Olga d'Oustinow, a charmer whose graces they said had kindled many flames before she married her second husband, Blanco d'Encala, a handsome Spaniard; Comtesse Aproxina, less beautiful,

but an expert in worldly science and in the art of witty conversation. There were also the two daughters of Field-Marshal Paschkiéwitch and the gifted daughter of Princesse Julie Gagarine; Princesse Lobanof, endowed with a thousand seductive graces; and Princesse Wolkonsky, her sister, whose intelligence was her great attraction. The same could not be said of Madame Korsakoff, her cousin by marriage, who was the daughter of her husband's steward. Madame Korsakoff was the subject of a good deal of scandal in the extra-worldly chronicles of a Second Empire. She was tall, with perfect shapes and wonderful colouring, with lovely hair and beautiful eyes. She would have been a perfect beauty but for the Kalmouk type of her features. She did not aim at distinction, and was quite content to fix attention by any means available. Tact, discretion, and good taste did not commend themselves to her. Madame Narischkine (*née* Baronne Knorring) was a strange contrast to Madame de Korsakoff. She was highly educated, and collaborated with Morny, the playwright-statesman. She became the wife of Alexandre Dumas *fils*. Another charming lady of the same name was the mother of the pretty Princesse Obolinsky. It is impossible to give a full list of the charming Muscovite colony which basked in the rays of the Parisian sun. The Second Empire was a delightful period, in which the Russian and Polish nobilities played an important part.

Morny cultivated valuable friendships in this society, which was independent in its tastes and opinions, full of contrasts and seductions, gay, witty, and intellectual. One of his most intimate friends was Mademoiselle Narischkine. He sought and found impressions of the mind as well as of sentiment in this attractive sphere, but it also afforded him some Don Juanesque episodes in the shape of intrigues which did not always remain hidden.

Morny and his brother, Napoleon III., were easy preys to temptation where peccadilloes of love were concerned. It was with them a family legacy, a question of heredity, but it was enshrouded in elegance and good form. If we believe the Goncourt brothers, he did not put a very high price upon the moral or intellectual qualities of a sex to which he owed so much. He was dining one night at Émile de Girardin's with Paul de Saint-Victor, Boittelle, the Prefect of Police, General Fleury, and the brothers De Goncourt. In their presence he made a full confession of faith. He began by asserting in a jocose manner that women had no taste—that, in a word, they did not know what good was, and that in all things they obeyed their whims and their caprices.

He warmed up to his text, and developed it to such an extent that we must refrain from quoting him in full. But, putting aside all philosophy and all question of idealism, he appreciated the eternal

feminine. He was credited with many conquests, some of which were never known to himself. Betrayed in some cases, wayward in others, he knew the usual fate of lovers, but his successes were more varied than those which fall to the lot of common mortals. "He was a good comedian," said Jacques Reynaud—or, in other words, the Comtesse Dash. "The size of the theatre made all the difference to his play."

He was a slave to that charm which no man can resist, but clever in utilizing his knowledge of those successive concessions which lead up to the inevitable end. He thoroughly deserved his reputation as an expert in the difficult technique of the art of love-making. In such matters he often stopped at the preludes, which are like pleasant skirmishes that do not always betoken the beginning of decisive battles. He carefully husbanded his courage, his strength, and his opportunities. The old Comtesse de V—— has said to us: "He knew how to choose the proper moment. He never importuned, and so well did he manage that he became the happy lover without ever urging his claim or hurrying in his task."

The time has not yet come, if ever it should come, at which we can betray the name of our informant. It is certain that the foreign society in Paris was his happiest hunting-ground. Schooled by an old and burning souvenir, he feared those eternal tides, those chains which nothing can break, with Parisiennes bred and born. Skilful, prudent, and

lucky, he devoted himself generously to the temporary Parisienne, and avoided the permanent ones to the best of his ability. In these passing entanglements he was able to preserve his independence, and to slip through the hands of these fair birds of passage with incredible ease and considerable grace. He spoke of them as "chains of flowers, which kind Fate unlinks without a wrench or a shock."

Monsieur de Morny cared little for public opinion, and did not confine his research work to aristocratic grounds or to the brilliant society which was essentially his by a process of natural selection. When the opportunity presented itself, he did not mind communing with women like La Païva, most of whom were faithful disciples of Aspasia.

The undeniable charms of Madame de Silveira relieved him of the worries of presidential life. He supped with actresses and members of semi-society, and compared those suppers to the voluptuous feasts of the Regency. He was an assiduous frequenter of the wings and the *foyer* of the Opera.*

It was a recognized fact that, thanks to his love of art and of artists, he was a powerful protector

* Morny was often seen at the Academy of Music, whither he was bidden by the love of certain persons as well as by that of the art of *bel canto*. During the intervals he either wandered through the side-alleys of the seraglio with other pontiffs of the stalls, or retired to the dressing-room of some queen of song like Marie Sasse, where he found expressions full of wit in which to praise the value of the artist's talent.

of nascent vocations* when they were accompanied by gifts of the mind and pretty faces. He took the greatest interest in the débuts of a pretty person called Bernardine Hamakers, who had just arrived in Paris from Louvain, and he led her by the hand to the Grand Opera. Several actresses of the Théâtre Français, such as Rebecca Felix and Rachel, boasted of having enjoyed much more than his friendship. Hortense Schneider was grateful for his generous attention. The delightful Alice Ozy, though far from being a marvel of intelligence, afforded him many a pleasant *tête-à-tête.* We can vouch for this, the proof of which we have found in the perusal of some fragmentary correspondence.† The *comédienne* and the great statesman chatted amiably through the post. The first two letters of Mademoiselle Ozy were couched in respectful terms, but great distances were covered in a very short time, for the tone of the third communication was so different that one feels certain of the occurrence of some new fact during the short interval which allowed the exercise of the fullest freedom on the part of the writer. The following extracts prove the truth of our assertion. In the first one it is the fair damsel herself who leads the charge: "If you do not answer me soon, I shall call in person, and in case your door is closed to me, I shall find a means of forcing it."

* See the first part of the "Memoirs of Sarah Bernhardt."

† See in our work "The Gilded Beauties of the Second Empire," chap. vi.

The second passage is rather exhilarating :

"My dear Lauzun,

"I feel the need to seek an audience from you. I shall come on Thursday next at five o'clock. It will be dark by then, and I shall not be recognized. Bear up in hopes of seeing me, and when I arrive be as amiable as usual. . . ."

Youth and beauty in a woman can rapidly equalize all conditions. Morny loved some such who, though not "born" in the sense sacred to the worshippers of armorial bearings, were none the less of considerable popularity. His dilettantism led him as far as the groves of the Château-des-Fleurs.*

Instantaneous love affairs soon found the level of Morny's heart. They only lasted during the flitting period of temptation. He soon forgot, and never took the trouble to inquire what had become of them.

Did all this mean complete and lasting happiness ? He was long deprived of the greatest of

* One of the prodigal daughters whom he met there was destined to experience the hardest reverses of fate. She lived for some time upon a footing of £15,000 a year. When that protection was denied her, she struggled, and then disappeared altogether. Where had she vanished ? Where was this flitting star ? The secret was only solved in 1892, when she was found in one of the Paris slums, selling cheap fish off a hand-barrow. Such was the end of this meteoric beauty, whose graces were displayed with lavish luxury. The Second Empire beheld her clad in lace and covered with diamonds ; the Third Republic found her selling fried fish in the slums of the capital.

all joys—that of a home and a family circle. More than once he expressed the wish to imprison in the bonds of matrimony a heart which was tired of giving itself and taking itself back. He was very nearly married in Florence. Before his departure for Russia, there had been serious mention of a possible alliance between him and an American lady, who afterwards became one of the Comtesses Von Moltke. Mademoiselle de Bondeville, a young lady of the Faubourg Saint-Germain, was also said to be his future bride. Again, he was supposed to be engaged in England.

He reached a mature age before knowing any joy but that of passing pleasures. At times he used to envy the peaceful comfort of a middle-class home. For years he had tried to sever the bonds of an old attachment which the weight of habit had made as heavy as a chain, and tied him more securely each time he tried to loose its grip. "Are you happy?" he inquired of General Fleury, who had recently put an end to his butterfly ways. "How I should like to follow your example! Marriage would seem heaven to me, compared to what I endure. No home, no freedom, no children! My life is odious."

At last he was able to leave Paris and France as Ambassador Extraordinary, and it was abroad, in Russia, that he found salvation.

He did so at the Winter Palace during a magnificent reception, when his attention was arrested by Sophia Troubetzkoï, a Maid-in-Waiting to the

Tzarina. She had an exquisite complexion, black eyes, and abundant fair hair. She was middle-sized and extremely graceful in her bearing. She lived at Court in the service of the Empress, under exceptional conditions easily explained by the circumstances of her education. She came of a proud race—that of the Jagellon King's—and belonged to the family of Troubetzkoï, whose history was ever strange and adventurous. Her grandfather had first married Princesse de Courlande, the divorced wife of Rohan. His second wife was the daughter of General de Weisz, who had inherited her mother's beauty. She was a simple child of Bohemia, promoted from a humble existence to a palace. Serge was the second son of this Troubetzkoï, and his life was filled with romantic episodes, one of which caused a great sensation. In broad daylight, and at the very church door, he had abducted the beautiful Madame de Jadmirowski, who was leaning on her husband's arm. She afterwards married Count de Castel. The flagrant audacity of such an act roused the anger of the Tzar, who sent Serge to Siberia and deprived him of his titles. While the victim of this disciplinary measure, the exile had cards printed thus: "Serge Troubetzkoï, born a Prince." He married Catherine Moussin Pouckhine, and was the father of Sophia, the future Duchesse de Morny. His marriage was of short duration.

Princesse Catherine Troubetzkoï left Petersburg

with her child, and came to Paris, where Kisselef was Russian Ambassador. She possessed the gift of pleasing, which is always more or less coquettish. She could not prevent gossipers from stating that she had been much courted by Nicholas I., and that she was an intimate friend of Kisselef. Slanderous tongues attacked her reputation, but she only smiled and preserved her grace and gaiety, which made her a great favourite in Russian society. She was suddenly seized by a grave illness. Thinking she was on the brink of the grave, and remembering the unlimited kindness of the Empress Alexandra, wife of Nicholas I., she asked her to take charge of the education of her daughter. Sophia was only seven or eight years of age when she was taken to the Russian capital, bearing her mother's letter to the gracious Sovereign. The Empress decided that she should be sent to an institution like that of Saint-Cyr in France, founded for the education of poor girls of noble birth. She jealously watched the progress of the child, and in due time attached her to her person.

Sophia Troubetzkoï's family displayed much solicitude concerning her future welfare. Morny had come upon the scene at the right moment. Youth and he had parted company, but grace and prestige, wit and elegance, were still his partners. The chance of becoming Comtesse de Morny and the second lady in the fair land of France was one that beckoned to her and tempted her. On the

one hand, he was looking for a wife of high birth in foreign circles ; on the other, she was a penniless girl who belonged to the highest ranks of Russian aristocracy, and could facilitate her husband's admission to a social set in which his self-pride would be amply rewarded.*

The aunts of the young Princess vied in hastening the conclusion of this alliance. They were the Princesse Woronsow, whose attachment to Nicholas I. had made her famous, and her sister, the delightful Sophia de Ribeaupierre, who has already been mentioned. They were both witty and amiable, somewhat coquettish, and they seized the opportunity of entrusting to a husband the keeping of a very pretty niece, whose advent to the family circle had been unlooked for owing to the separation of her parents, and who threatened to become their powerful rival within a very short time.

Paris soon learnt the matrimonial intentions of Morny. The news evoked many protests in the French capital. Moreover, questions of interest were mooted, and it was stated that the French Ambassador Extraordinary had omitted to settle his accounts before his departure in a financial partnership in which all sentiment was divorced. Officious limbs of the law like Rouher complicated matters. The Emperor himself was appealed to. He was asked to prevent the impending ruin of a lady which was about to be caused by Morny's

* The Emperor of Russia settled £20,000 upon Sophia Troubetzkoï when she married Morny.

abandonment. Rouher declared that she was entitled to an indemnity for a breach of promise, the effect of which would compromise several speculations in which the lady was engaged, in common with powerful speculators. Napoleon did not conceal his grave annoyance about a matter which he feared might culminate in a scandal. He foresaw that if the truth was made known by a public trial, nothing could remove the bad impression which must be created in the public mind. The result of such publicity would be far-reaching, and not only would Morny be besmirched, but also the Government and the Head of the State. Cæsar's anger was not completely allayed by the signal diplomatic services rendered to French influence by the culprit. Napoleon III. dealt with the question at issue without hearing the other side, and ordered Morny to pay the millions which were claimed. This was done. Morny conceived violent resentment against Rouher, his own protégé, who had stage-managed the whole affair. He never forgave him for interfering with a cause, however just, because by doing so the obscure little barrister from Riom had been guilty of base ingratitude towards the statesman who had made him.

General Fleury tells us in his Memoirs that he parried a serious blow dealt at Morny by the Emperor. The latter, we hear, had made up his mind not to reappoint his brother to the presidency of the Chamber. The alcove stories, aggravated

by the questions of money, were deemed so serious that Napoleon would not overlook them. Though jealous of the good fortunes of Morny, Persigny was endowed with two undeniable qualities, sincerity and disinterestedness. He urged upon the monarch the fact that, by removing the President of the Chamber from a position which he occupied with exceptional tact and marked ability, a very serious error of judgment would be committed. Fleury further tells us that Morny was forewarned of his coming disgrace, and that he hurried to Plombières on his return from Russia to confer with his brother. The result of their interview was that he saved the situation and won his case.

This is the version given by Fleury, with many statements tending to prove the great influence exercised by him. As a matter of fact, Morny's position was never in jeopardy, notwithstanding the efforts of the Countess and the annoyance felt by Napoleon III. Such is the conviction to which we are driven on perusing his last letter, forwarded from St. Petersburg.

"My dear Emperor,

"You have reappointed me as the President of the Corps Législatif. The die is cast, but I am about to be married notwithstanding. Walewski asks me whether I am returning, and if so, when. To this I can only reply that I wait my Emperor's orders. Pray believe in my tender and respectful affection.

"(Signed) Morny."

There is not a word in these lines which betrays excessive fear or strained relations.

Comte and Comtesse de Morny were now on their way to France. Baron de Behr-Pohpen wrote half a century later: "I saw them both when they stopped at Frankfort-on-the-Main on their return from St. Petersburg. They stayed at the Hôtel de Russie, and the Countess was radiant, dressed in a travelling costume of white piqué without a single jewel. Her husband looked the happiest and the most loving of men."* Her début in society did not take place until the following spring. She was compelled to live in the intimacy of her home, as she soon expected to be a mother. She made her first appearance at a ball given by her graceful compatriot, Madame Narischkine-Ouschanow. Wearing a pale blue dress spangled with golden stars, a simple rose in her fair hair, and lovely pearls upon her neck, she produced an impression of telling grace and beauty. Her husband took her to the Tuileries, and to all the functions of the Imperialist society. She attended them without enthusiasm. Like many other women of high rank, she expressed profound pity for this improvised Court, the contrasts of which were certainly trying. She resented

* Comte de Morny's certificate of marriage was drawn up in Latin on January 7, 1857 (Russian era). The marriage took place at St. Petersburg in the parish of St. Catherine. The officiating clergyman was Pierre Condez, a Rector of St. Louis of Moscow. There is no mention in the certificate of the parents of the conjoints.

PRINCESS LÉONIDE MENSCHIKOFF, NÉE PRINCESS GAGARINE

having to attend official receptions, and refused to do so as often as might have been expected from one bearing the name of such a high official as her husband. A Legitimist, and a follower of the Bourbon Dynasty by birth and by taste, she wore in her hair the fleur-de-lis emblem of the old Royalist party. Her attitude towards the Bonapartists was one of haughty reserve. She considered that she was out of her element in a mixed gathering of such recent creation that it was motley of its very nature. She showed no indulgence towards the foreign Court she had just joined. During one of the receptions at the Château she kept her eyes fixed upon one of the guests, the Comtesse de Montijo, and, comparing her to the Dowager-Empress of Russia, she drew conclusions in no way favourable to the Spanish lady, and far from flattering the entourage in general. "See," she said to her companion and relative, Baron de Behr, "look at the Dowager-Empress from here. Then tell me what you think of the rest. Prostoi, prostoi!" And she repeated, looking round the Imperial circle, "Wsejda prostoi!" which means, "One and all vulgar!" Her severity was excessive towards a Court incongruous of necessity, but which shed more brilliancy in many ways than the "mirrors and nonentities of St. Petersburg," to quote a saying of the Duchesse de Dino. At this period the whole of Europe was fascinated by the glamour of Parisian society. Its charming levities

were criticized, but it remained the most seductive of all, a source of envy to all others.

Such were the first impressions of the Comtesse de Morny. She had not had time to rid herself of acquired prejudices, and, moreover, she was not fired with Napoleonic faith. Her relations with the Empress were essentially cool, and they became more frigid when later on she married the Duc de Sesto, who had remained the sentimental ideal of the proud and beautiful Spanish woman throughout the astounding metamorphoses of Eugénie de Montijo.*

Her relations with the ladies at Court were essentially superficial. She was offended by the emancipated ways of gay women, but later on she had to resign herself to the frivolous behaviour of the Russian colony, which she frequented mainly

* The Marquise de Morny, younger daughter of the Duke and Duchess, has written the following details in her manuscript memoirs. We cannot vouch for the accuracy of them, the responsibility of which we must leave to her. Referring to the house of the Duc de Sesto in Madrid, she says : " The apartment that we inhabited was that of my stepfather before he married, and I have often heard it said that the Empress Eugénie had come there before she became an Empress, to claim the Duke, whom she loved to desperation. On several occasions she threatened to die on his account, and actually asked him to marry her after Napoleon, the Prince-President, had offered her a throne. But at that time the Duc de Sesto, my stepfather, was in love with her sister, the Duchesse d'Alba, and declined the offer of the Comtesse de Téba. It was then, for France's misfortune, that she accepted the Emperor, being unable to marry the man she wanted." If these facts are true, they afford ample proof of the disinterested nature of Eugénie de Montijo, since she was not swayed from the true object of her affection by the tempting offer of a throne.

on account of her relative, the charming Comtesse Woronsow.* She was endowed with keen observation, and formed her own judgments, which were nothing, only original. "The Frenchwoman," she was wont to say, "is possessed of charm, intelligence, and subtlety. The difference between her and us is that her existence is divided into small compartments. We Russian women move in large compartments, with the natural result that our lives often end in dramas, and that we are always heavily in debt. The Slavonic soul requires space and excitement." Exalted ideas, haughtiness, a spirit of domination, fantastic ideals, and at times excessive roughness of manners—such were some of her salient features. Her violence at times would yield to great softness, and her straightforward nature enabled her to form and preserve strong friendships. She never forgot an offence. She always remembered a kindness. In all things she was extreme.

She could be gracious, attractive, and refined, and such was the impression she conveyed upon those she liked. She resented being disturbed in her habits, or having to sacrifice her personal comforts even to reasons of State. She took little part in the political life of her husband, and did not consider it her duty to entertain his deputies. When compelled to do so, she performed her duty

* The Countess was her paternal aunt, who lived in the Avenu de l'Impératrice, which afterwards became the headquarters of the Grand-Dukes Alexis, Wladimir and his boisterous companions.

with scant grace. She received the honourable members of the Corps Législatif as if she were a statue. They bowed to her as they passed before her, but she maintained an attitude of perfect indifference towards them. When told that as Duchesse de Morny she should show some interest in her husband's official guests, she replied: "No doubt, but what conversation can you expect me to hold with them ? I know nothing of French politics, and they know all about the weather, since they always come from outside. Their wives have never been introduced to me, so I cannot ask them how they are getting on. Will you please tell me what is left as a subject of conversation ?"

" But you may be sure, Duchess, that you could find many subjects of conversation besides those ; a good many of these Deputies are extremely witty."

" Oh, I quite believe that, but as everyone in France is witty, a witty conversation would be commonplace."

As a rule she avoided these receptions. She did not like the Deputies, and she said so. She had a circle of intimate friends to whom she was devoted. While Morny did the honours of his picture-gallery, and received his guests on the ground-floor, she used to remain in her sumptuous apartments, smoking cigarettes in the company of faithful friends and fellow-countrymen, playing cards and patience. Morny had made the best of the situation, although she would have afforded him more practical aid had he insisted upon her

doing so. He showed great indulgence towards her, owing, no doubt, to a slight feeling of his own superiority. He never crossed her in her tastes, however singular they might be.*

Save in this political and middle-class set she was natural and vivacious. Her originality of manners pleased and amused her husband, who encouraged them instead of restraining them.

She entertained towards him dutiful and deep feelings of regard, while his affection for her was deep and delicate. He loved her with graceful tenderness, with kindness, almost with condescension. This did not mean that he never faltered.

On one occasion he was guilty of a grave indiscretion. His wife had brought with her from St. Petersburg a young girl of noble birth, but without fortune, who had been her favourite companion at school. They had exchanged sentimental promises while dreaming the dreams of schoolgirls, and had sworn that whichever married first would look after the welfare of the other. Sophia Troubetzkoï did not forget her promise when she became the Comtesse de Morny. She praised the merits of her friend to everyone, and to her cousin De Behr she said one day, "Will you take her ?" but he was afraid to become engaged. Eventually the inevitable happened. Mademoiselle —— was too often with Monsieur de Morny.

* She had an extraordinary liking for weird animals of all sorts. The apartments of the Presidency were filled with rare birds, monkeys, Japanese dogs, and other extraordinary specimens.

She was witty, attractive, and somewhat frivolous. His look, his voice, his gesture, were all eloquent. This caused a catastrophe.

The Comtesse de Morny used to visit her eldest child every Thursday at Viroflay, where she was at school. As a rule her husband accompanied her, but on one particular day he asked to be excused. As a result Madame de Morny's plans were slightly modified, and she returned sooner than usual. She went straight to her friend's room, and found that she was not there alone. The girl's confusion testified to her guilt. Violent reproaches sprang to the lips of the injured spouse, who turned her late friend away from the house, saying: "I have performed my duty towards you as a true friend, and in return you have been untrue to me. You have robbed me of my husband, my most precious possession. Go; I do not wish to see you again." A good deal of bitterness lingered in the heart of Madame de Morny, but gradually she forgot. De Morny had won back the affection that he prized, and he requited it to the full, though it did not master him completely. Notwithstanding the true affection which he bore his wife and children, he never could renounce certain dissipations of the heart, which are the natural apanage of youth, but a sore trial to men who never grow old. In common with all such De Morny was doomed to go on culling the flowers of life, wearily, perhaps, but to the bitter end.

CHAPTER VIII

ARTS AND LITERATURE

A short sketch of the theatrical and gambling circles of Paris—Morny as a dramatic author—His extraordinary opinion of his dramatic talents—The author's joys and disappointments—An intruder who proved to be a spoil-sport — Morny, Villemessant, and Rochefort — How Morny's fond wish was never realized—A curious side-light upon the character of a statesman favoured by Fate in every way, yet haunted all his life by one ambition the theatre—Thiers and the old friend of the Duc d'Orléans—Unforeseen political alliances—Morny's famous picture-gallery—His artistic dilettantism—His secretaries: the two Daudets, Ludovic, Halévy, and others—Their respective share in his daily work and intimate life.

His Excellency the President of the Corps Législatif varied the monotony of his political work with other pastimes besides society and mundane functions. He had a particular weakness for people and matters connected with the stage.

At a period when Princess de Metternich ordained the pleasures of Compiègne with amiable turbulence private theatricals were the furore. Everyone was bitten with a mania for acting. One and all thought themselves possessed of hidden talents as playwrights or as interpreters of the

histrionic art. Napoleon III. boasted of a collaboration with the witty Gondinet. Walewski, the Ambassador and Minister who had more than one affinity with the Théâtre Français—so said the papers, referring to his well-known friendship with Rachel—had conceived great hopes since the performance of his "École du Monde" in the house of Molière. Great preparations had been made to insure the success of his work. Édouard Thierry, a good writer, and the Director of the Comédie Française, had worked at it. The masterpiece had been read to a number of famous critics, and performed for the first time before Thiers, Rémusat, Mignet, and d'Alton Shée. Mademoiselle Anaïs played the principal part with talent and with feeling. The play was a huge fiasco, notwithstanding, and could not be worked into a triumph, although Victor Hugo wrote the following lines to the disappointed author: "You still have enemies, so your play must be considered a success."

As to Monsieur de Morny, he never doubted his aptitudes and ability as a play-writer. The statesman and speculative financier delighted in posing as an agreeable fantasist, whose art consisted of imparting value to the most commonplace words. He adopted a pseudonym. Away from the Palais-Bourbon, he called himself Monsieur de Saint-Rémy and appended this name to his theatrical effusions. At times, he was so gripped by the passion and love of stage matters that he confused the various parts

and attributions of a play without being aware of it. The President was unwittingly merged in the personality of the dramatic author. When about to preside at the Chamber, he would often whistle some refrain recently heard while he donned the grand cordon of the Legion of Honour and his various stars and decorations. On the occasion of an important Parliamentary debate, in the course of which many weighty questions were to be discussed, he almost forgot to preside, because in this same Palais-Bourbon his play, "La Succession Bonnet; or, Les Finesses du Mari," was being rehearsed. Delaunay, the famous actor, was his stage-manager, and Morny could not tear himself away from the delight of listening to his own prose and watching his characters moving to and fro before the footlights. He forgot the time, the orders of the day, the debate. Secretaries rushed in to tell him that a full house awaited the arrival of the President. With a surly gesture he curtly replied: "All right, all right; I am coming." As "Baptiste" took up the last cue of "Sophia," the sharp word of command of the officer on duty and the beating of the drums announced the arrival of the President of the Corps Législatif.

Each morning he received a great number of people in the famous reception-room which he used as his study: they were candidates soliciting all sorts of favours, financiers, Members of Parliament, artists, or intimate friends. He also gave

audience to the costumiers of opera and to others, who obtained his advice and consulted his good taste upon frivolous matters.

He indulged his fantasies to the best of his ability. He took up a theatrical subject, conceived by him between two Parliamentary yawns, and forthwith strove to make it live upon the boards. The subject might be some comic proverb, an idea for a *revue*, or a charade which he meant to elaborate for some chosen audience capable of appreciating such delicacies. He attacked it with all his might, and devoted much time to it. While it was thought that His Excellency was closeted in order to study some deep question of importance, Monsieur de Morny had really become Monsieur de Saint-Rémy—an excellent fellow, this Saint-Rémy, who was much more interested in the doings and sayings of Monsieur Choufleury* than in such changes as were called for in the Constitution of 1852.† However full his days might be, he found spare time to collect musical notes upon some tender and light motif, or to write songs and plays. He read them to friends, some of whom, like Ludovic Halévy or Hector Crémieux, knew them beforehand, having helped to write them. As a rule, the first performance of these efforts took place with closed doors in the

* "Monsieur Choufleury restera chez-lui" was the title of a little *opérette* written by Morny, and set to music by Offenbach.

† Morny also wrote "La corde sensible," the idea of which was given to him by the Emperor.

mansion of Madame Narischkine. He would seek her advice about the dialogue and certain scenes, for he had a great opinion of the intelligence of this high-born Russian lady, who turned night into day, smoked incessantly, and spent her time reading or chatting, according to her mood. She was endowed with a mind both alert and witty. The expert censors then received the *magnum opus*, and improved it here and there with much complacency. It was eventually performed before an enthusiastic audience, which had come to applaud the efforts of the great man.

Morny betrayed great weakness towards his dramatic efforts. He was highly pleased when complimented upon them, for he thought himself vastly superior to the ordinary amateur. He was really convinced that he possessed that sovereign faculty—the gift of genius. So strong was his conviction that he thought he would have scored heavily as a dramatist had he not been weighed down by the burden of State. His real ambition would have been to deserve a knight's cross of the Legion of Honour, had he not been created Knight Grand Cross of that Order, through his collaboration in the drama of December 2. In this wise did our hero exaggerate the importance of his innocent distractions. The microbe of literary ambition was playing havoc with him, and he did not know it. Manuscripts partially hatched left his table in quick succession, to face the dangers of notoriety through their publication. Morny

was bound to taste the bitter fruits of publicity, though he did enjoy some of its sweets. "The Life of Julius Cæsar," written by his illustrious brother, had been severely criticized, and he could not reasonably expect that the critics would allow the works of Monsieur de Saint-Rémy to go unnoticed.

The secrecy of his pseudonym leaked out, intentionally or otherwise. Newsmongers were informed in a whisper of the true identity hidden by it. Fashion-writers and paragraphists were not slow to praise his mighty efforts. The fashionable organs of the day threw many bouquets at the mysterious author, and placed delicate wreaths of fulsome flattery upon the brow of the newborn genius. There was, however, one discordant voice in the concert—an ironical and harsh voice—which threw all respect to the winds, and roughly handled the subjects, the dialogues, and the *mise en scène* of Monsieur de Saint-Rémy. The statesman's theatrical efforts were torn to shreds in bitter madrigals, although their author had been invited to the Presidency to meet the Imperial circle and the Prince critics of the day. He had been asked to attend the reading of a comedy written by Monsieur de Morny. He did not accept the invitation. The papers had referred to the work in complimentary terms which seemed excessive to Henri Rochefort, the adverse critic to whom we refer. Jules Lecomte had waxed enthusiastic. Albéric Second, a decorative writer,

more decorated than convinced, had concluded his criticism with the following words of praise: "How fortunate it is for us poor writers that the author of this delightful little play should be absorbed by higher politics! What would become of us if he could devote his leisure to theatrical matters?"

This appeared on the day when Henri, Comte de Rochefort,* wrote his weekly article.

He was in a bad mood, and the tirade of Albéric nettled him. He replied to it as follows:

"How lucky is this author, whose participation in a fruitful *coup d'état* has saved him from the necessity of living by his pen! If one of us dared bring such an inept production to a theatrical director, he would forthwith have been seized and thrown into the den of the female attendants of the theatre, whose instructions would have been to fell him to death with footstools."

The following morning the boulevard was provided with a source of merriment. Independent, cynical Paris of yore greeted the opportunity of asserting its bygone independence. On opening his *Figaro*, Morny had read the scathing words.

* "However much he has boasted of being a Republican, Rochefort is very proud of being a Count. His friends are well aware that he uses two different sorts of visiting-cards. The one bears the words 'Henri Rochefort,' and the other 'Le Comte de Rochefort de Luçay,' with a Count's coronet." We find this statement in the Memoirs of Villemessant, who had had some cause of quarrel with his famous critic.

Despite his usual self-control, he was both surprised and mortified. Whence could this blow come, and how had the editor and writer of the *Figaro* dared to perpetrate such a crime? An orderly—a "Garde de Paris"—was despatched, booted and spurred, to the office of the paper. He was the bearer of a summons calling upon the editor to report himself forthwith to the Presidency. Villemessant was well aware of the cause of this, but in no way perturbed. He knew that he was in the good graces of His Excellency, whom he kept amused with his stories, his natural gaiety, and with the newsy gossip which he conveyed to him. An able courtier, he could bow low to "Monsieur le Duc," or burst into peals of laughter in his presence. He had not forgotten the many attentions bestowed upon him by the police in the shape of warnings, fines, and summonses, when he steered the course of the defunct *Chronique de Paris.* He knew the value of such a mighty protector as Morny, whose smiles had recently served as passports to many dubious sayings of the *Figaro.*

When he entered the fortress, otherwise the study, of the President, he tried to avert the storm by adopting a pleasant, jocose manner, which, as a rule, succeeded. "Monsieur le Président, you have surely bidden me to your presence to confer an order upon me. Such was the impression of my staff, who are preparing to illuminate the office in honour of the event."

PRINCESS RADZIWILL, NÉE PRINCESS OUROUSSOW

The sally was not appreciated. He had to deal with a wounded author. Morny was unbending.

"Monsieur de Villemessant, your critic has transgressed the bounds of legitimate criticism. His words were dictated by evident and refined malevolence. What have I done to Monsieur de Rochefort? Why does he bear me a grudge? I might long since have broken his pen and dried up his ink had I so willed."

Villemessant offered profuse apologies, and looked extremely sad.

"It is a dreadful occurrence! Had I been there the article would never have appeared. Unfortunately, I was not at the office on that day, and as I did not correct the proofs, the rascals took advantage of the fact."

Morny was not satisfied with this explanation. His self-pride was hurt, and he would have liked to see another article published in the same paper, which would have deadened the blow dealt by Rochefort's prose. Like a young poet, full of illusions, he sent his playlet to Jouvin—Benedict Jouvin, Villemessant's son-in-law.* He was a re-

* He probably wrote De Villemessant's articles. This was at least insinuated. It was even openly stated in the following passage of a police report concerning the person and the doings of Villemessant: "He has published a great many criticisms and theatrical papers, which he has inspired, if not written. It is stated that, notwithstanding his ability, he cannot write. Monsieur Jouvin de Grenoble is the author of the articles signed by Villemessant" (Manuscript Report of July 7, 1852, of the Ministry of Police).

On the other hand, Rochefort stated the same fact, but

fined writer, who edited the theatrical columns. He thanked Morny and made him a promise, which he never kept, knowing that by so doing he would run two risks—that of failing to observe the laws of courtesy or of betraying those of truth. In the meanwhile the daring writer had not resigned. This first outburst of Rochefort gave rise to much anxiety. His spirit of chaff and banter was ready to exercise itself in other skirmishes pending more serious battles. Morny conceived great apprehensions concerning the future pamphleteer, in whom he recognized an adversary whose power and audacity were a source of danger.* Until now the seductive son of Flahaut had had every reason to bless his lucky star. He had mastered many an avowed enemy. Why could he not now tame this undisciplined but brilliant man, and use his caustic wit against the enemies of the existing régime ? Could he not do so by smiles and promises ? He suggested it to his faithful liege, Villemessant, who swore by Morny, and spoke of him *urbi et orbi* as the presiding divinity of *Le Figaro.* Villemessant, however, was unable to silence the pen of one of his writers. †

more spitefully, in the "Adventures of his Life": "Villemessant did not write in his paper, for the simple reason that he did not know how to write. That is why he was never jealous of his contributors."

* Some years later the Government insisted upon Rochefort being dismissed from *Le Figaro.*

† Alphonse Daudet tells us, in his book "Trente Ans de Paris" that this Villemessant governed his paper like a despotic autocrat, but that he could never govern Rochefort.

The first performance of a famous operetta by Ludovic Halévy afforded a good opportunity for bringing the two rivals together. Morny was present, and so was Rochefort, in one of the first-tier boxes. The house was a brilliant one, and all the personalities of the day exchanged greetings in the corridor. During an interval Morny stopped Villemessant, and whispered to him: "Now I have you cornered: you must introduce Rochefort to me."

"Certainly, Monsieur le Duc, with the greatest pleasure. We were chatting together a minute ago, and I will go and fetch him."

The editor had got out of his depth, for all his efforts to persuade Rochefort were unavailing. The obdurate critic did not like Villemessant's ways, so he returned to his box, and remained there for the rest of the evening. Alphonse Daudet has related how Morny was haunted by this fixed idea of making a friend of the author of "Les Français de la Décadence." Rochefort himself has given us details upon the matter, and set forth his reasons for obstinately refusing to accept such a strange friendship, the component parts of which were fear, rancour, and mental attraction. Several of Morny's followers were aware of this strange preoccupation. They endeavoured to rid him of a strange obsession which marred the happiness of this pampered man. Some of them assured him that he took an exaggerated view of the importance of this journalist,

who was not worthy of his attention. They assured him that his opinions were erroneous, and that his arguments were hollow. They went so far as to state that he was not a stylist, and that his wit was only apparent.

Much as they reviled the man, Morny lent no ear to their words. He tried to devise the surest and speediest means of meeting the absent one, who irritated him and thwarted him. Rochefort stood in his way like a bunch of thorns, pricked him and worried him. The all-powerful man, the Vice-Emperor, was quite disposed, if necessary, to take the first step towards reconciliation.

The potentate of *Le Figaro* felt ill at ease, and unable to cope with the whim of the one and the obstinacy of the other. He did not despair, however, of mating the *enfant terrible* of his journal. Rochefort was passionately fond of paintings and all works of art. He would spare no time or trouble in unearthing a rare picture. Villemessant spoke to him in eulogistic terms of Morny's collection. He promised to show it to him, and to afford him thus an artistic treat. They agreed to meet on the following day. The host was naturally in this plot. For two hours he paced his gallery, awaiting the expected "monster," who, suspecting a ruse, remained at home. Morny never forgave him.

To the end of his days, even on his death-bed, he was pursued by this one wish, which had remained unsatisfied. His intimate friend Delahaute, the

banker, met Rochefort at Monte Carlo, and said to him : " You will be one of Morny's last regrets, the harrowing recollection of his dying days." These words were repeated to us by Rochefort himself.

The polemic writer had displayed great prudence. He preserved his independence by refusing to meet this amateur of art, the most fascinating man in the world, in the very midst of his collection of masterpieces.* Morny's picture-gallery was a great weapon in his hands. He often used it as a common ground, upon which he met men who were his adversaries when they entered and his friends when they left it.

It was understood that those who came there did so with no other intention than to admire artistic jewels of priceless value. They rejoiced beforehand to think that on its very threshold they would gaze upon a Rembrandt wearing a wide black felt hat and a tawny beard and moustache ; that near by they would have the delightful impression of a certain " Escarpolette," a delightful fruit of Fragonard ; that they would see the famous " Fête " of Watteau, with its delicate and somewhat sad figures ; " L'Heureuse Famille," by Reilly, with appetizing colourings ; " La Dévideuse," by Greuze, tempting through her in-

* Would Morny have succeeded in winning him over ? Villemessant always said that Rochefort's nature was a very impressionable one, upon which his latest friend could exercise great influence. " He always remains under the influence of the last friend whose hand he has grasped."

genuous appearance and her pink-coloured flesh. The conceptions of the brush of Boucher were but a few of the artistic marvels which could claim their attention. Men came there to feast their eyes and their imagination. Was this not an ideal zone, from which turbulent passions and political amenities should be banished? But before they left, they met the happy possessor of these masterpieces. They conversed with him about them, discussing their history and perhaps their value. They left the gallery still under the master's spell, converted, if needs be.

This was how the famous interviews took place in 1863 between Thiers and Morny. They met in the famous rooms upholstered in red damask.

They had both sailed together upon the waters of Orleanism. The events of December had seriously tried their mutual sympathy, but they were both too intelligent to harbour feelings of eternal hatred. It was secretly arranged that they would effect some sort of truce, without mentioning the fact to anybody. Though Thiers had preserved no relations with Morny, he knew that the latter consecrated an hour a day to his pictures. It was during one of those hours, at about half-past one, that, on November 6, 1863, he directed his steps towards his picture-gallery, before presiding over the Assembly. By chance Thiers had come to visit the masterpieces, and, by a strange coincidence, Morny followed in his wake a few minutes later. The two famous col-

lectors met before a Rembrandt. How could they help exchanging views, and paying a joint tribute to the genius of the great master of chiar-oscuro? The conversation was prolonged and extended to other matters. They parted with a hearty hand-shake, and met half an hour later in the Chamber, where Morny occupied the presidential chair, while Thiers sat on his left, just above Jules Simon and beside Lanjuinais. It was the opening session. Morny made a graceful reference to the recent reconciliation. He welcomed in his speech the return to Parliament of two great personalities who had been temporarily removed from the political arena. He added that he welcomed their return because he so fully trusted the loyalty of their intentions.

The following day, he went to the Tuileries, where Napoleon congratulated him upon his speech. The Chief of the State, however, thought fit to temper his praises with a certain amount of reserve.

"My dear President, your speech was most appropriate under the circumstances. There was one sentence, however, which I thought somewhat exaggerated. Referring to the election of Monsieur Thiers, you said: 'For my part, I rejoice.' That you should rejoice seems excessive when referring to the election of a member of the Opposition."

Morny replied that these two members were

old colleagues of his, to whom he owed some consideration, and that in such cases amenity of expression and discretion were surely wise.

"Well, well," replied the Emperor in a jocose tone, "I see I must make the best of it. I have surrounded myself with enemies. You are an Orleanist—yes, an Orleanist."*

Morny gratified his love of pictures in a very practical manner. He applied it to his financial and political schemes, as well as to the satisfaction of his artistic tendencies. He had a refined and delicate appreciation of works of art. This was inherited, for all his family loved paintings. For some years the household of Madame de Souza, including herself and her son, ransacked shops and collections in search of miraculous discoveries. Hear what she has to say upon the subject to the Comtesse d'Albany, to whom she wrote on April 5, 1811: "I do not know what will become of us, thanks to our passion for pictures. We are all buying as hard as we can, and if Monsieur Fabre does not approve of the quality of our purchases, he will certainly have no cause of complaint as to their quantity." She willingly confessed that enthusiasm guided them both much more than real knowledge.

"You say that Charles and I know nothing about pictures? That may be, but I think I

* Morny was an Orleanist, just as the Empress was a Legitimist, so long as nothing was changed in the existing state of things.

know more than he does. Besides, the halfpenny dealers have thrown in their lot with me, and you would be amused to witness some of our transactions."

She was extremely proud of the quantity, and used to express her delight at having been able to collect so much in so short a time.

"I beg to inform you, Monsieur Fabre, that I have thirty-eight pictures or more, most of them extremely valuable, and that I yearn to show you my treasures. I say nothing of the immense pleasure of seeing you. The connoisseur Talleyrand is still delighted with my Carlo Dolcis." She does not question for an instant her wonderful luck in being able to discover a Titian, an Ostade, and many other works of masters. Her son Charles had met with similar good fortune.

The mother and son were likewise deceived, and purchased awful daubs, thinking that they were works of art. Their taste was in no way reliable, while Morny, their descendant, was an extremely good judge, and, besides, he was possessed of means, which enabled him to pick and choose. His magnificent collection included Rembrandts, Metzus, Terburgs, and Greuzes.

Most of those masterpieces had been hung in his small house in the Champs-Élysées. It was a small, narrow residence in appearance, but the artistic wealth it contained was ample compensation for its somewhat mean exterior. The collection was composed of works of all schools, and

every one of them was both rare and authentic. He had increased it little by little with considerable judgment, and had effected some excellent bargains. Such collections always increase in value. In the case of paintings, as in everything else, this able man always discounted the profits of the future. He purchased valuable works, but never at a sacrifice. His pictures, like his racehorses, increased in value from the mere fact that they had been in his possession. A good many works of art remained in his collection but a very short time—just long enough to acquire an increased selling value among the many financiers who were forming collections at that time. Such men considered it fit and proper, as well as profitable, to purchase something from the famous statesman's collections.

His dilettantism assumed every form of expression capable of charming. He inherited the love of music from his mother, while his love of mental elegance came to him from Madame de Souza. He was just as devoted to literature as he was to art: his essays, whether serious or frivolous, the sympathy he showed to writers, and the number of his intellectual friends, proved that one of his greatest delights was to play the part of a protecting Mæcenas.* His administrative aides-

* When, in 1860, Edmond About's work, "The Roman Question," was suppressed, the brilliant writer stated that several members of the Government had been his collaborators;

de-camp were young secretaries with little aptitude for bureaucratic work, but they were intelligent young men, anxious to obtain those sinecures which enable budding academicians to cover the thorny ground of a literary novitiate without very much trouble. Ludovic Halévy and Alphonse Daudet were among those enlisted in his service. When Fortune had led Alphonse Daudet to a Parisian salon frequented by Morny, and when the mighty lord had offered him a position in his service, the young man ingenuously declared that he was a Legitimist. " So is the Empress," replied Morny, with the shrug of the shoulders which meant, " That does not matter much, and will not interfere with the work that I expect of you." The author of " Amoureuses " had little experience of men and things in those days. He was just twenty. His administrative ability was poor, and his energy was remarkable by its absence. He was the last to arrive at the office and the first to leave it, but everything was made extremely comfortable for him. He came to the conclusion that his position would be all the pleasanter if it could be shared by his brother, who was working modestly at Provins. He stated so to his Mæcenas.

The Chambers had just been unmuzzled. They had now the right to speak, to discuss, to exist. This entailed a considerable amount of work upon

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that the Emperor had corrected the proofs ; that Fould had worked at it ; and that Morny had written the last chapter, " Metropolis in Paris," upon an idea of Napoleon I.

the Home Office, the staff of which had to be increased. Two appointments remained vacant. The one was given to Ludovic Halévy; the other to Ernest, Alphonse Daudet's brother. The young provincial drove up to the Presidency in a cab at seven o'clock one morning. Knowing nothing of the official work, he was under the impression that great men should only be approached by their subordinates in evening dress. It was a cold, dark November morning, and the sleepy ushers were slowly dragging themselves to their appointed posts. They gave the stranger a very cold reception. What could he mean by coming at such an early hour? He must have mistaken the house, and they would soon inform him of his mistake! When he presented his letter, however, one of these insolent underlings condescended to lead him to the Chinese drawing-room, where the young man remained alone. One o'clock came, but he was still alone, worn out by anxiety and fatigue. Not knowing how to kill time, he proceeded to settle some details of his dress, which had suffered through his long journey. He was busy removing the creases of his coat-tails when the door opened. A woman appeared on the threshold for a minute, and disappeared, enveloped in the smoke of a cigarette. It was Madame de Morny, who hurried to tell her husband that the Chinese room was occupied. The President of the Corps Législatif came down in a blue velvet smoking-jacket.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" he inquired.

The young man declared his identity, and everything was soon explained. Morny informed him in three minutes that he had been appointed secretary, that he must see the Chief Secretary Valette, and then be introduced to Denis de Lagarde, Chief of the Staff; and that henceforth there would be two *Daudets* on the staff in the service of the President. He then invited the weary traveller to retire to rest.

Morny seems to have discovered from the onset the exceptional gifts possessed by his young secretary, Alphonse Daudet. At times he would question him about grasshoppers, or about the women of Arles, or about his windmill and the mistral winds. It is not certain, however, that he ever appreciated to the full the marvellous charm of this great intelligence. Daudet was never associated with the intimate thoughts of Morny. Besides, he thought that Daudet looked too much like a poet. The Duke was rather bald, and was annoyed at the sight of the wealthy locks of black hair which almost fell upon Daudet's shoulders. Whenever he met him, he would give him the address of Lespès, the famous hair-dresser, saying: "Get your hair cut." Daudet objected to change his appearance, and felt mortified at his Chief's personal remarks. However light the grievance may have been, the memory of the Duke somewhat suffered through it at the hands of the writer.

The author of "The Nabob" had already acquired the habit of taking detailed notes, which

eventually became so many episodes and portraits. He was not able to do so very regularly or in broad daylight in the Morny household. A few details caught on the wing, some fugitive appreciations and impressions, represented the sum-total of his analysis. He did not receive the confidences of the great man. This explains the following sentence, spoken to us one day by De Morny's son : " Alphonse Daudet saw things from the anteroom only." There was, in truth, very little contact between the Duke and his attaché. Daudet never went near him, except to ask for leave, while Ludovic Halévy saw him every morning.

The future author and composer of " La Belle Hélène " entered the service of the State in July, 1852. He had just left college. This wonderful ironist was afforded an early opportunity of studying the pettiness of officialdom. He soon lost the taste for political dishes, through seeing them cooked. His time was not wasted, however, because his spirit of observation found useful food in such surroundings. He fully appreciated the advantage of his comfortable berth, hoping at the same time that he might soon be able to pass it on to someone else. He did not do so as soon as he had wished, for he only left the service when the death of the Duke severed the ties of personal affection which had kept Halévy at the Presidency.

Each day he read to Morny the reports of the debates in the Corps Législatif. They were tran-

COUNTESS SOPHIE DE RIBEAUPIERRE, NÉE PRINCESS TROUBETZKOÏ

scribed from his own shorthand notes, which he had taken at the little table under the tribune, where he sat between his friends Maurel-Duperré and Anatole Claveau. His daily relations enabled him to analyze the ideas and impressions of the statesman—a very cold and reserved man, whose real impressions were known but to a few.

New and important events had recently taken place. The Imperial decree of November 24, 1860, had restored communication between the Corps Législatif and the country. The Parliamentary Tribune stood again upon its feet. Brilliant speakers who had remained dumb since 1852 suddenly recovered their voices. Once more there were speeches and reports of debates. Official eloquence was personified by Billault—a true, virtuous, powerful, resourceful, and ductile orator. The Liberal Opposition was represented by Jules Favre, the logician; by Ernest Picard, the man of wit; and by Émile Ollivier, the man of emotions. The President of the Chamber felt that his position was less of a sinecure than in the past, and he endeavoured to enhance the moral authority of his Deputies in the mind of the public. The last two considerations lead us back to the political deeds and personality of Morny, which we have too long neglected.

CHAPTER IX

ACTIVE POLITICS ONCE MORE

A peaceful presidency—The inception of the Corps Législatif, and the attributions of Monsieur de Morny—Signs of a coming evolution—An interlude—The Emperor's journey to Auvergne—The festivities of Riom and Clermont Ferrand, after which Morny is created a Duke—How his holidays were put to good purpose—Morny founds the town of Deauville, by the sea—From the Channel to the American Mediterranean—Morny's part in the Mexican adventure—Sidelights upon internal politics — State Liberalism—Napoleon, Morny, Émile Ollivier—What Morny would have done if Fate had given him time to realize all his ambitions.

Since the year 1854 Morny had occupied the presidency of the Corps Législatif with that conscious authority which makes for power and influence over other men. His was more or less a dignified task, not one of moral or political direction, as long as he presided over an Assembly whose eloquence had become deliberative, and was spent upon financial and administrative matters only. This was the result of the compressive will of those in supreme power. The modest attributions of the nation's representatives and of their President were enhanced by external pomp and a display as brilliant as it was meaningless. When

the mighty President took possession of his arm-chair, soldiers lined the way from the Assembly Room to the gallery of the Presidency. Drums beat amid a clattering of swords. Two ushers, with gold chains round their necks and swords by their side, headed the procession. Then came the President, accompanied by two officers, his secretaries and the General Secretary. With such imposing surroundings, he assumed the character and enjoyed the honours of a Prince of the Empire. The early period of Morny's presidency was calm, easy, delightful. The Deputies were lulled to sleep by a sense of perfect peace, and settled down for a six years' siesta upon the pillow of the secret ballot. They dozed happily. A word, a sign, sufficed to awake them, so that they could register the unanimous vote that was required of them. They approved, and blindly followed their leader. There was no discussion, for everyone applauded everything. In order to prevent the resumption of old debates upon such questions as the liberty of the Press or the liberty of opinion, both liberties had been suppressed. Two qualities only were needed by him who had to rule the rulers of France —tact and common-sense. He used them both to the fullest extent. He told them that what they were bidden to do was for the good of the Empire, which meant the good of the nation. They voted enthusiastically for every proposal submitted to them. The Parliamentary conversations were like the warblings of birds in an

aviary. Now and again, at the extreme left corner of the House, the "Five"—that is to say, the Paris representatives of the Opposition—endeavoured to murmur. Their efforts were soon quelled by a chorus of official voices.

During certain discussions of an important nature Morny followed the debates with close attention. He sometimes took part in them to the extent of offering judicious advice, such as, "Be sober in your judgment." This did not often have the desired effect, because to preach sobriety to an orator is like preaching temperance to an inebriate. He never indulged in long tirades, which he considered misplaced when coming from the judge or supreme arbiter. His views on this matter were to his personal advantage, for he was not a born orator. Perhaps he might have become one by practice, but elocution and an easy delivery were not attributes of his. Though he denounced the habit of delivering written speeches, the words that flowed from his lips never struck one as being spontaneous. He hesitated when he spoke, which he always did with considerable effort. He was much more successful in witty repartees, in throwing off a clever impromptu or a well-considered sally. Some of this author's lines, spoken as impromptus, and complacently underlined by those who heard them, were greeted with loud applause on the Government benches. The Deputies frantically applauded his statement that

if Paris was the head of France, the provinces composed its heart. He adduced from this that "France has a hot head, but a good heart." It is true that criticism had its counter-effect, and a famous polemist declared that this was a detestable maxim, an outrage to universal suffrage.

Morny could fit himself to circumstances and make quick use of them. He quelled many storms by a graceful word, which caused the Assembly to smile benignly; but when he had to speak, he did not make so sure of his influence.

This fact was proved some years later, when he tried to reply in debate to an attack made by Jules Favre upon the Emperor of Russia. Having vacated the Speaker's chair, in which he was replaced by one of the Vice-Presidents, he ascended the tribune. All eyes were fixed upon him. He endeavoured to prove that Alexander II., the emancipator of serfdom, had been a Liberal Sovereign. He also reminded his audience of his intimate knowledge of the Tzar, of whom he had seen so much during the coronation festivities, and whose loyalty and sincerity he was prepared to vouch for. All this read very well, but its effect was nullified by the bad delivery of the orator.

He would not have remained long as Minister of the Interior had he been compelled to cross swords daily with the Chambers, to fight them inch by inch like a Republican Clémenceau. The Home Office, under a free régime, would have

proved too uncomfortable a residence for this phlegmatic man, unless his powers of assimilation had enabled him to master a situation so difficult and rivals so inferior.

In a free Chamber he would have needed some other voice besides his own, which served his purpose admirably in the House he had to control. If some unforeseen incident took place in the serene Assembly, the shorthand report of it was read to him that evening, very often while he was dressing for dinner. The next day he remembered every detail concerning it, and made use of it at the next sitting.

The Parliamentary regulations in those days were less complicated, better ordained, and better respected than they are now. The work of the Corps Législatif was more disciplined. The orders of the day were adhered to, and their progress was not interfered with by such amendments, proposed at the last hour, as have no practical effect, but which compel a House to begin all over again that which it has almost accomplished. Morny had a straight line to follow. Monsieur de Boissieu has said of him that he was a past-master in the art of loosening and tightening the reins. He fully possessed the sense of propriety which afforded one and all a fair proportion of time for speech-making and for administrative work. He was so skilful in checking his power by toleration that he created an illusory atmosphere of freedom. His censorship left manuscripts intact, and within

reasonable bounds he gave full vent to the speakers, knowing that words fly fast and far, and are more easily forgotten than rigorous measures. In a proper spirit of conciliation he invited to his house men of all shades of opinion, among whom his personal sympathy created a sort of fusion. Morny followed the example of great Romans by creating a clientele of friends, whom he strengthened by his influence, and who lent strength to him by their personal doings. He had already tried this method under the Government of July, when he included in his Parliamentary sphere of action several colleagues, among whom were the members of the Puy-de-Dôme — Rouher and Parieu—whose political future he had soon foreseen. A group of twelve intelligent and faithful Deputies gathered round him under the Empire. Their mission consisted of propagating his views, and enforcing them discreetly at a critical moment when the House hesitated to accept them. The manœuvre was an able one, and it enforced his authority in the Corps Législatif.

So much did he think of the importance of his high functions that Morny never wished to exchange them for an Embassy or a Portfolio, until he accepted a diplomatic mission in 1857. On more than one occasion it was thought that he would occupy a militant position. In 1859 his return to the Ministry of the Interior seemed so certain that a reconstruction of the Cabinet was actually announced. He refused the position

offered him, and continued to occupy the one which best suited his tastes and his dilettantism. He felt no inclination to become an active combatant and to assume heavy responsibilities in a position that did not compare favourably with the presidency, so far as peace of mind and fixity of tenure were concerned. Some blamed him severely for this course of action. The author of the "Cahiers Noirs" wrote: "We deplore the weakness of the Emperor, and we are indignant at the egotism of Morny." He paid no heed, however, to the views expressed by others, and continued to enjoy his comfortable quarters at the Corps Législatif. For some years Morny enjoyed repose with dignity, till one day he became aware that his task was strangely complicated.

Politics, like the sea, are ruled by ebb and tide, or by alternatives of action and reaction. The autocratic régime which had seemed indispensable after the events of December 2 and until 1860 was beginning to yield to a new system, in which public control resumed its rights. The country had decided that its influence in public affairs must be more direct and more effective. The time was near when ideas were to undergo a great change, thanks to the direct appeal of the Emperor to his people as well as to his advisers. Morny himself claimed the honour of adapting his own initiative to the new order of things. Between the two periods of his political career a pleasant

interlude occurred, which suited his convenience and gratified his pride. This was in 1862, when he was created a Duke.

He had gone to confer with his faithful constituents of the Puy-de-Dôme during the Parliamentary recess. The Emperor had chosen the same date to pay a visit to Auvergne—a visit that had long been deferred. The coincidence was premeditated by him. He meant to recognize long and faithful services rendered to him with signal success, and he also intended to satisfy the ambition of his loyal henchman. He chose this solemn occasion, and started on his journey with a ducal brevet, which was to be conferred upon the Comte de Morny.

The Imperial train started towards the provinces of Cantal and Puy-de-Dôme. It reached the station of Riom on July 10. The Sovereigns were met by Rouher, Minister of Public Works; by Field-Marshal de Castellane, commanding the army of Lyons; and by Comte de Pressac, Prefect of the department. The Mayor handed to the Emperor the keys of the old city, the ancient capital of the Duchy of Auvergne. The usual speeches were made by the Chief Magistrate and by the President of the court, who heaped upon the Imperial guests fulsome official praise, couched in richest metaphors. His flattering remarks almost equalled those of the Archbishop of Rouen, who, on a previous occasion, had described the Emperor as "the Chosen One of God," and the

Empress as a "Clotilda or a Blanche of Castille." An enormous crowd applauded the speeches which it could not hear. The town of Riom had made great preparations for the reception of its exalted guests. In the centre of the boulevard a sort of obelisk had been erected. It was really a gigantic stone drawn from the quarries of Volvic. The long procession passed under triumphal arches and amid profuse bunting and floral decorations. The Emperor was accompanied by a large retinue of Chamberlains, Orderly Officers, and Aides-de-Camp, besides Messieurs de Clermont Tonnerre, De Varaigne, De Bourgoing, De Noirterre, De la Ferrière, and others. Great joy and animation reigned among the masses, who wore the picturesque costumes of the Limagne country. The ceremony proceeded on the usual lines—the presentation of public bodies, a visit to the public monuments and institutions, and the distribution of rewards in the shape of a few decorations conferred upon the authorities. Amid the final outbursts of applause the Imperial train steamed out of the station, and did not stop until it reached Clermont-Ferrand. The Sovereigns were awaited by Comte de Morny, President of the General Council, who was accompanied by the principal citizens of the town. The capital of Auvergne had donned its Sunday clothes and assumed gay colours in honour of its august visitors. Flags and banners, triumphal arches, and symbolic troops of statues met the eye at every turning.

The sun shone brightly, and the air was rent by the roaring of the cannon and the acclamations of a thousand voices. An immense crowd gathered on the line of the procession. The Emperor, wearing the uniform of a Lieutenant-General, rode with his Consort in an open carriage, escorted by a detachment of the Imperial Guard and a squadron of the 1st Regiment of Hussars. The toilette of the Empress was the subject of universal admiration. She wore a pansy-coloured dress and a white hat, trimmed with ribbons of the same colour as her gown. The procession repaired forthwith to the cathedral, where the Bishop, at the head of his clergy, poured forth warm blessings upon his Sovereigns. He congratulated them upon the services they had rendered to the Church, and appealed to them for further help, which was expected of their generosity and of their great power.*

* Here is a significant passage in the pious allocution: "Catholic hearts could not have remained indifferent to the sore trials which attend the Vicar of Jesus Christ in the midst of the deplorable complications of the Italian Revolution. We have been deeply moved by them, but, while praying for the welfare of the Father of the Faithful, we have never ceased to pray for the powerful Monarch who governs us in the temporal order of things, and whose brave soldiers continue to protect the rights of the Holy See by their presence in Rome.

"Yes, Majesty, we daily pray to Heaven that you may be able, with the help of Providence, to secure the happiness of France and the peace of the Church.

"Majesty, these wishes are not only inspired by religion, but also by gratitude, and while the name of Your Majesty is solemnly re-echoed by the walls of this ancient Cathedral

From the church to the Prefecture, Napoleon and his Consort seem to have been borne upon the wings of popular enthusiasm. "Auvergne welcomes the saviour of France with one heart and with one voice."

Morny occupied the chair, and addressed his Sovereigns. His speech was perfumed with myrrh and incense, for the glorification of the divine Cæsar, and he found happy expressions in which he described the Napoleonic devotion of the whole country-side—a devotion which he termed a religion.* The Emperor's reply was awaited

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we are reminded of your generosity, and we make bold to hope that it will again be exercised in the interests of this, the Mother Church of the Diocese. It has long remained unfinhised, and is quite insufficient to meet the wants of our numerous population, which is ever imbued with an excellent spirit" ("Le Moniteur du Puy-de-Dôme," July 12, 1862).

* "Majesty, the arrival of Your Majesty in the Puy-de-Dôme does not only constitute the visit of a Sovereign, well loved and deeply respected. The enthusiasm which greets you is due to other causes. Among these laborious populations who live peacefully in the heart of France the Napoleonic sentiment is not an opinion; it is a religion. Here political faith has almost become a superstition. For the past twenty-five years I have often been made the confidant of this true adoration.

"Our hills, our vineyards, rest upon subterranean passages and chasms, which date from the period of Gaul. These dark recesses, these underground labyrinths, were no doubt used to resist the invasion of the Roman Cæsar. For the past fifty years they have afforded shelter to the fanatical admirers of the modern Cæsar. The dauntless sons of Auvergne have foregathered in these caverns under every régime. There, as if pursuing the practices of a persecuted faith, they celebrated the anniversary of St. Napoleon, without admitting

as the event of the day. He would have liked, he said, to bestow upon each one a proof of gratitude for so much loyalty and devotion. This he would try to effect by catering for the interests of all. He wished to begin doing so by affording a testimony of his goodwill to the President of their General Council. It was his wish, he added, to confer a new title—that of Duke—upon him who for twenty years had represented this loyal and laborious country, who had acted so courageously on the eventful December 2, and who for eight years had presided over the Corps Législatif. Such services deserved the highest recognition. Henceforth the brother of His Majesty might feel himself in closer touch with the hierarchy of Highnesses, one of which he yearned to be. On his return to Paris his coat of arms was promptly devised, and his position as Duke fully confirmed.*

The newly-created Duke was soon to experience keen satisfaction of another nature. He had gone

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that their hero was a mortal. Hence the ardour and the unanimity with which the whole province hailed the name of Napoleon, and placed it in the ballot-box. You can thus imagine, Sire, the intoxication of this population, which greets you with a heart filled with a feeling of political religion and with deep gratitude for the services you have rendered. You have given it that glory which elevates the soul, ensures safety, and procures work. Our people tenderly salute the Empress, who has placed Grace upon a throne, from which she dispenses Charity " (Morny's speech, July 10, 1860).

* The ducal coat of arms, granted in 1862 to Comte de Morny, recognizes him as the son of the Comte de Flahaut. It bears the Flahaut quarter (*d'argent à croix, merlettes de sable*).

to spend the summer at Deauville, by the sea. He was proud of the growth of a town which he had really founded and developed. Deauville did not exist until Morny had studded it with gold and with villas, by the help of his social and financial friends. It was only an annex to Trouville—a modest village built upon a hill which protected it. Sumptuous mansions were soon thrown up there—mansions like those of the Boulevard des Italiens. They were rapidly occupied. For some years past the medical faculty had prescribed sea-bathing, and its advice had been followed. As a result, Trouville, formerly a fishing-village, had come into existence as a prosperous seaside resort. Its growth had been such that a home was now needed for the overflow of Trouville. It was Dr. Oliffe, a friend of Morny, who first conceived the idea of founding another resort in the same district, and who saw the great advantages of Deauville. He imparted his views to Morny, who visited this unknown corner of the department of Calvados. He was enchanted with it, and saw great possibilities in its future. In 1859 he began to shape the destinies of Deauville, which he linked up to Trouville by a railway-line. He then provided it with a dock and harbour, and built a racecourse. The initiative was quite a natural one in his mind, as he was the founder of the Paris Grand-Prix. In 1860 the magnificent terrace or promenade was built. To-day it has reached a length of two miles, and upon it is constructed

an unbroken line of beautiful villas, nestling in luxuriant verdure. Morny had still greater ambitions for the development of Deauville. He wanted to make it a great city, the terminus of a line joining Trouville with Bordeaux, without passing through Paris. He felt sure that such a line would deal a heavy blow to the English coasting trade. The directors of the Great Northern Railway of France opposed the scheme successfully, fearing that it might have a very bad effect upon their earnings.

Deauville grew and developed, thanks to such an illustrious patron, whose name and image were engraved upon every one of its monuments. A large harbour was soon constructed; capital fostered its industries; fashion filled it with visitors, invalids, and tourists. In a word, a French Brighton had been founded on the banks of La Toucques.

It is a long way from Deauville to Mexico, but Morny linked the two towns in the circle of his restless activity. The intervention of France in Mexico had just been decided upon. It had been prepared by Gabriac, the Minister Plenipotentiary, and further engineered by his successor, De Saligny, a nominee of Morny. Napoleon III. had conceived the ambitious plan of founding in Mexico a Latin Empire, which would arrest the invading progress of the United States. This plan was somewhat justified by the internal troubles

which had arisen in the country, and by the financial claims which France had a right to make against the Mexicans. The Empress endorsed her husband's views with romantic enthusiasm. De Morny joined issue, for reasons more practical, the day he realized that the matter was fully decided, that the initial steps were already taken, and the Emperor's decision was irrevocable.*

He had many private interests in Mexico. He felt certain that the French troops would soon get

* The present Duc de Morny has stated to us in conversation that his father was strongly opposed to the Mexican Expedition, which he considered very ill-advised. Furthermore, he resented the instigations of the Empress Eugénie. Facts are, however, undeniable. They are proved by the following extract of a letter written after Morny's death by Jecker, the banker, to Conti, the Emperor's secretary :

"PARIS,
"18th *December*, 1869.

"SIR,

"You may think it strange that I should write to you personally upon a matter which really concerns His Majesty the Emperor.

"You have doubtless heard of my Mexican Bonds business. Well, I think the Government seems very indifferent about it, and if this matter is not dealt with immediately, it may have very unfortunate results for the Emperor.

"I do not think you know that my partner in this matter was the Duc de Morny, who, in consideration of thirty per cent. of the profits, undertook that my interests should be respected, and my claims met by the Mexican Government. In proof of this, I hold a lengthy correspondence which passed between the Duke and his agent, Monsieur de Marpon.

"Both these gentlemen sent for me in July, 1861, and requested me to handle this business. I made an agreement with them when my firm was already in liquidation, so that anything accruing from the business belongs to the said firm. The demise of the Duc de Morny deprived me of the powerful protection of the French Government."

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the best of the rebel bands commanded by Jaurés. One revolution more or less was of no importance in a country like Mexico, which had been ruled by thirty-two different Governments between 1825 and 1862. Moreover, this immense country offered wonderful chances. It would have to be exploited; heavy loans would have to be effected, for which heavy commissions would be paid to the intermediaries. The result must be that, through the channel of the worthy Jeckers, many millions would be brought back to France. All these reasons urged Morny to lend his active co-operation to the Mexican Expedition. He was always interested in speculation, and drove politics and business in double harness, often at the risk of his own reputation.* In this expedition he incurred heavy responsibilities. He risked his name, and even his life, according to Persigny. He nurtured the hope of sleeping in an Imperial bed, like his brother, Louis Napoleon. At one time he hoped to reign in the room of Maximilian, and, had he done so, he would have been clever enough to avoid the fatal end of the Archduke upon the sunny plains of Queretaro.

Morny had once favoured the views of Walewski, who advised the immediate withdrawal of the

* We find the following anecdote in the Memoirs of Monsieur Picard, the Public Prosecutor: "The name of Monsieur de Morny was often mentioned in actions of law. In one case in which he was defendant I said to Mathieu, his counsel: 'A De Morny should neither lose nor win actions. He should never be mentioned in a court of law.'"

French troops; but a private discussion had estranged these two "Princes of the blood," and Morny decided to prolong the campaign, partly in order to spite Walewski.

In the meantime, Don Gutierrez de Estada landed in Europe, at the head of a deputation of Mexican citizens. These representatives of the Conservative Party had come to offer the crown of Mexico to Maximilian. He decided to forsake the shady glades of Miramar in favour of an unstable throne, but on two conditions: firstly, that France would send twenty thousand troops to maintain him upon it; secondly, that the sum of three millions of francs (£120,000) should be advanced to him, in order to meet the initial expenses of his household. The Council of Ministers rejected both requests.

The following account of the incident was given eight years later by the Duc de Persigny to a British diplomatist who did not respect the secrecy of his confidences. The Council was so hurriedly summoned to the Tuileries that Walewski was an hour late in joining it, having had to come a long way. On the previous Saturday everyone thought that the Mexican business was concluded.

What had happened? Merely this: Gutierrez, on learning the Council's decision, had cabled to Maximilian, who replied that he would refuse the crown unless his conditions were accepted by the French Government. The Mexican Envoy was fully decided not to return to the land of his birth

without a monarch, so he rushed to De Morny, and offered him the crown of Mexico. The latter accepted immediately, in the event of Maximilian adhering to his refusal. The Emperor's fury knew no bounds, but Morny remained obdurate. There was only one man who had any influence over him. That was "the other Prince of the blood," because Morny paid no heed to the legitimate Bonapartes. Walewski was summoned by telegraph, and hurried from his estate of Étioles to the Council Chamber, where a loan was under discussion. The Empress informed him of what had occurred, and implored of him to dissuade Morny from carrying out his intentions. Walewski refused to make any advances by speaking to him the first.

What effect would have been produced in Europe, or even in France, if Morny had been raised to the throne of Mexico ? Sooner than run such a risk, it was decided to obtain the requisite funds, and to send General Bazaine's army to the front. The unhappy Maximilian thus went to meet an awful death. The Mexican business was at its inception at this time. France believed in Mexico, and Morny embarked confidently upon this campaign, which he looked upon as the prelude to a colossal industrial campaign. It matters little whether his ambition soared as high as a throne, for he was entitled to fondle every illusion at a period of his life when he had met with nothing but happiness and success.

There is one golden hour, one luminous zenith,

in the life of every man, when prosperity, joy, and triumph combine to yield their utmost. The Duc de Morny had reached this culminating-point. He possessed famous pictures, he was the darling of exalted and fashionable women, and had met with untold success as a statesman and a financier. He wielded great influence. His advice was taken by the Government, and he reigned supreme over the Chambers. The wind suddenly changed, though Fortune continued to smile on him, while confronting him with elements somewhat disturbed. Once more political ideas had assumed a concrete form in the sleepy mind of the nation. The Emperor himself had decided to grant it freedom of speech and freedom of thought. Napoleon's imagination had been flattered by his own generosity in yielding so much of his authority. Was he not the crowned historian of Julius Cæsar ? Had he not a fine example set him ? He loved to compare himself historically with the Roman Emperor. He thought it would be magnificent to effect what had been attempted by the greatest of Romans, and to this end he had hoped to bring about an opportune transition between power and liberty—not liberty undisciplined or misdirected, but a wise, measured form of liberty compatible with the exercise of authority.

Morny set his sails in the proper direction. His ideas had not varied much since 1852. He was instinctively a Monarchist, owing to the sentiments with which he had been imbued, if not to

family traditions, for he barely knew his family. Liberalism was never implanted in his soul, and conscience was never deeply rooted in him. He hated democracy, but he argued thus: "Since liberty is now the goal in view, it would be suicidal on my part to move in the opposite direction." There were other reasons which urged him to put these new ideas into practice, even if he had not been tempted to do so by pure logic. He was sick of witnessing the continuous antagonism between the Emperor's advisers—men devoured by jealousy, and much more eager to supplant one another in the good graces of their Sovereign, than to strike a blow for the public good. He knew the pitiful details of these harrowing and ceaseless rivalries. That alone sufficed to make him seek salvation in another direction. Under the July monarchy, he had realized that the best way to fight an Opposition is to forestall it by enacting just and useful measures, the benefit of which should never be left to one's adversaries. He did not, therefore, obstruct an evolution, which he could not have prevented in any case, as it had been put into motion by his superior. He saw its perils, knowing by experience that it is just as difficult to put a brake upon liberty as upon despotism. He was aware that the granting of concessions begets an appetite for greater and more complete concessions; hence struggles, strife, and bitter opposition. No sooner had the experiment been tried than it very nearly justified

the political axiom, "The first thing that a nation does upon acquiring its liberty is to abuse it." Tongues were set loose, and they did not start by singing a hymn of gratitude. The *posteri libertatis*, or descendants of liberty, who had been lost or forgotten, reappeared upon the scene. Morny devised clever and original tactics, in order to fight them with their own weapons. He proceeded to make allies in their own camp. One of his early successes—and by no means the least—was secured by winning over Émile Ollivier from the ranks of the Opposition. Morny used to say of him that he rushed into discussion like a bull into a china-shop, utterly regardless of the breakage. He hoped to tame his fury by leading him back into the paths of Government. The decree of November 24, 1860, conceived by Walewski, had just been graciously signed by the Emperor. Morny appeared very satisfied with him, and he said to Émile Ollivier:

"Well, I hope that you, too, are satisfied."

"Yes," was the reply; "but, since you ask my opinion, let me tell you that, by this decree, you are either made or hopelessly lost. Through it you shall stand or fall."

"How so?"

"You are made if this is but a beginning, and you are lost if it is your final word."

The answer was far from reassuring. Morny remained silent, and pensively returned to the Palace.

The interviews between him and Émile Ollivier

became more frequent. They discussed the questions of the day, and exchanged views upon foreign politics. Upon this ground they were in complete accord. Both wished to see the unity of Italy and the reform of the Papacy—a subject most displeasing to the Empress, but which they considered to be one of the two indispensable conditions for the preservation of peace. The respect of the policy of non-intervention and the cultivation of England's friendship did not, in their opinion, jeopardize the Franco-Russian union.

Morny's friends expressed surprise at his encouraging these daily consultations. One of them said to him at the opera :

" Ollivier says that you are compromising him."

" Does he not think he is compromising me ? As a matter of fact, my dear fellow, neither of us is compromising the other. We are making each other famous, that is all."

The changes to be effected in the former autocratic régime had hardly begun when the absolutists began to complain. The Catholics were growing anxious.

" The Press is not being watched," said Bishop de Bonnechose. He insisted upon the suppression of several papers which had written disrespectfully about the Blessed Benoît Labre. The Deputies of the Right, guided by the Empress, thought ill of De Morny because he favoured reforms which, to them, were detestable, and must inevitably cause the downfall of the Empire

and of France herself. He favoured them, they said, for his own selfish motives. Maupas, Rouher, Jérôme David, accused him after his death, and after the events of 1870, of having been the chief accomplice of Émile Ollivier in that fatal campaign which gave birth to the liberty of the Press and to the law recognizing the right of public meetings.

As a matter of fact, Morny had received his orders from the Emperor, and merely carried them out. Several clouds had more than once come between the two men. Tired of his debt of gratitude, Napoleon had doubtless said one day: "I am dragging my two bullets, Morny and Persigny"—words which he perhaps regretted the very next day. Morny, however, had won back his affection and his esteem more by force of circumstances than by the rights of brotherly love. If there still existed a brotherly dissonance between "Louis and Auguste," le Duc de Morny was the most trusted adviser of the Emperor Napoleon.

At the end of the session of 1864, Morny's plans were ripe. He admitted that Ministers must perforce remain Members of Parliament, and he recognized that the liberty of the Press should be recognized by law. In December his last doubts were dispelled, and he said to Ollivier:

"My mind is made up. Moreover, I have come to an understanding with Rouher. The Emperor still hesitates on the grounds of opportunism, but we shall convince him soon—perhaps to-morrow. Be ready, draw up your programme, and, if we agree, you, Rouher, and myself will assume office."

He was anxious to cleanse, in purified waters, his reputation as a politician. He made advances to State Liberalism, because he hoped to find in it a new departure for himself—some form of renascence. During his early experience he had not displayed much liking for responsible Ministerial posts. He was not seduced by the prospect of spending his days dealing with administrative quibbles, receiving candidates, or signing State documents. He was, however, hungry for power. He wished to seize it in order to effect useful reforms which would perpetuate his name as a statesman. He meant to inspire, to discuss, to act with the approval of the Chief of the State. He intended to give the most important posts to the most eminent men. Public opinion would surely be impressed by the noble fact that the conquered and the conquerors of December were working hand in hand in order to bring about that era of liberty whose advent had been too long delayed by hatred. He smiled as he dreamt of a new era of increased prosperity and peace in the country, and he saw in his mind's eye orders and regulations drawn up in the interests of the Empire, but neither dictated by tyranny nor by weakness. The premature wasting of his strength, his illness and its fatal issue, prevented his dream from becoming a reality. While both at home and abroad difficult and perilous complications gathered fast around the throne, he left this world's stage, saving his reputation, like the lucky gamester that he was.

CHAPTER X

THE LAST DAYS OF A STATESMAN

The consequences of Morny's strenuous life—First symptoms of a grave malady which puzzled the doctors—The patient knew from the onset that he was seriously affected—Morny and the medical faculty—The legend of "The Man with the Pearls"—Morny's abuse of drugs which he thought would give him life—The various phases of his illness—He suffers from pancreatitis—Anxiety at Court, and bewilderment of the whole staff of the Palais-Bourbon—When extenuated by suffering and fatigue, Morny calmly prepares for the "great departure"—He carefully sorts his papers—His farewell to the Duchess, to his children, and to his friends—The Emperor and the Empress in the sick-room—Pathetic scenes—The end—After the Duke's death—The Duchess and her children—Circumstances which induced her to become the Duchesse de Sesto—Her second home and her new sphere of life—The results of Morny's death, his family, the Imperial régime, and the country at large.

NIGHT and day Morny overtaxed his strength by work, by business worries, and by the pursuit of pleasure. His health was not equal to his efforts. He expected too much of Dame Nature. His physical energy was sorely tested by the discharge of his duties as Speaker of the House. A further claim was made upon it by his earnest endeavour to master the intricacies of home politics, to say

nothing of his arduous work as a social magnate, a protector of the arts, which, of course, included the stage.*

Though he endeavoured to hide the fact, his health had been waning for some time past. One morning a friend said to him : " Would you like me to send you a case of oranges from Monaco ?"

" Many thanks ; I shall be very glad to accept them, for they may do me some good."

" Are you unwell ?"

" Worse than that, dear friend. I think I am very, very ill. The constant, agonizing pain from which I suffer in the side is far too acute not to be a serious symptom."

His friend tried to reassure him, and told him that he, too, had experienced similar symptoms. An eminent physician had declared, however, that it was only a nervous affection. Morny shook his head. As he grasped his friend's hand he smiled sadly, and said : " Mine is a dangerous case."

A few months previously he and his wife had made a short stay in Auvergne, in his property at Nade. On the day of their return to Paris the carriage was at the door. Madame de Morny and the Duke were about to enter it, when she noticed that she had forgotten a trinket in her bedroom. Her husband insisted on going to fetch

* Speaking of the Emperor, Mérimée said : " There comes a time in life when we should beware of physical revivals." Up to the age of fifty-six Morny preserved sufficient looks to cause illusions. His youthful appearance was mainly due to his graceful proportions.

it himself. As he came down the stairs, a large mirror hanging in the hall was cracked from top to bottom without any apparent reason. The Duchess was superstitious, like all Northern people, and she felt that this was an ill omen. "We shall never return together to the Château de Nade," she said.* Her sad presentiment was soon verified.

However prosperous a man's life may be, there is always a certain amount of sadness about it. In a turmoil of pleasure, pampered by fortune, and handsomely served by circumstance, Morny must have felt at times that weird anxiety described by Balzac in his famous work, "La Peau de Chagrin" (The Shagreen Leather). Raphael, the hero of the novel, depends for his very existence upon a piece of shagreen leather, which shrinks as soon as one of his wishes is accomplished. It is harrowing to follow his efforts throughout the work to stifle every sensation, to lull his intelligence to sleep, and to annihilate his faculties, so as to obtain a few hours' respite from the fatal sentence of death.

Likewise, the anæmic Morny, worn out by excesses of work and pleasure, was a prey to neurotic sensitiveness, to fever, and to the eternal fear of heat and cold, even in the heated atmosphere of his private apartments.

His delicacy was inherited from his father, who

* "As Duchesse de Sesto, she visited the Château in the company of her son Serge and her daughter Missie. But she hated it so that it was sold for a song by our tutor, Count Benedetti" (Manuscript memoir of the Marquise de Morny).

survived him by many years.* The letters of Madame de Souza to the Comtesse d'Albany contain numerous references to the frequent indispositions and ailments of Charles at a very early age. In 1814, when only twenty-six, he was no more a brilliant horseman.

His mother wrote to the lady in Florence: "Many thanks for the box of alkermes. Charles has had a very bad sore throat and rheumatic pains in his head. They were so intense one night that he nearly threw himself out of the window. So much has he improved, however, that he is now able to canter in the Bois de Boulogne."

In her correspondence she often mentioned the neuralgic and digestive disorders of the young Auguste. In a word, Morny had had cause to fear doctors all his life. He was a frail and delicate youth. As soon as he had regained his health to any extent, he tested it severely in the ardent pursuit of pleasure. He would then repair to some fashionable healer or some well-known quack. His health became his chief preoccupation. Numerous visitors waited long and patiently before they were received by the statesman. Many of them went away without being able to see him, but his doctor was always ushered in forthwith.

This was a most prosperous period for quacks and prescribers of empirical remedies, which were paid their weight in gold. These humbugs played

* General de Flahaut died at the age of seventy-five.

upon the wealthy and the idle, whose chief occupation was to relieve their imaginary ills. So long as the fashion obtained, the dispensers of drugs and draughts used it as a road to fortune. Men and women, overwrought by excesses of all sorts, sought salvation at the hands of charlatans, whom Daudet has vigorously depicted as "Dr. Jenkins," "the man with the pearls." These pearls, or globules, enjoyed a great reputation. They imparted brilliancy to the eyes and a feverish animation to the whole body, which created the illusion of renascent youth and vigour. Their virtue consisted in lashing the nerves, and enabling them to perform their functions for a very short time. The immediate sensation produced was mistaken for a permanent improvement in the general condition of the patient. Many who felt exhausted and utterly undermined would suddenly recover their vivacity and ardour, thanks to the electrical vigour transmitted by means of these globules.* Morny used them, and no doubt abused them, so that he might play his part to the end.

He suffered from an affection the seat of which lay between the liver and the stomach. The doctors could not accurately diagnose it, and he

* Such was, at any rate, the legend of the arsenical pearls described by Daudet. They were supposed to procure immediate and burning effects, delightful but deadly. The principal characters in the novel "L'Homme aux Perles" were Monsieur de Mora (*alias* Morny), Dr. Jenkins (Morny's doctor Oliffe), and the Nabob, or Bravais, the famous inventor and compounder of the "Fer Bravais," the iron tonic.

MISS DE MORNY AT THE AGE OF ELEVEN

accelerated its progress by the excessive remedies with which he endeavoured to cure it. He was not easily caught in business matters by rodomontades, or in politics by high-flown words ; but he was an easy prey to the circulars and advertisements of any panacea merchant who floated his goods upon the market. Like all those who are less tormented by illness than by the fear of illness, he was always ready to try the latest remedy, which he soon forsook in order to resort to something else. When he opened his paper, he began by reading medicinal advertisements. Therapeutic and empirical lies were accepted by him in the best of faith. Galvanic batteries which purported to impart heat to an exhausted venous system shared his favours with elixirs supposed to bestow health and strength upon the patient. At other times he would resort to some mixture, the object of which was to induce sleep and rest.

In the latter days of his life he became enamoured of the " Leroy Pastilles," which were supposed to do wonders for the purification and the renewal of the blood. This drastic compound was not as healthy as he thought. It produced nefarious results upon the health of De Morny, who had already suffered from the abuse of calomel, which he took in large quantities because it suited his father.

He never betrayed any signs of those petty weaknesses. He remained to the end a calm and dignified man. His ailment was somewhat in-

definite in its symptoms, save for the great weakness which it caused. He did not suffer acutely, and no one would have dreamt that his condition was really serious, or that he would have been so soon compelled to forsake power, honours, and fortune. Nevertheless, his strength was slowly oozing, and a livid pallor began to bear witness to the gradual destruction of organic vitality. Though he suffered from insomnia,* he did not miss a single society function. Every night he was to be seen at his club or at a theatre, apparently in the best of health and temper.

He never spoke of his ailments, though at times he complained of great lassitude, and said that he would like to be rid of the arduous work entailed by the Presidency. When his friends became aware of his intention to resign and to lead a quiet life, they protested, stating that his decision was premature ; that the next legislative session would be pregnant with weighty questions ; that a critical period was near at hand ; and that his firm and far-seeing guidance would be more needed than ever.

" These are the very reasons which make me fear that I shall not have sufficient strength to

* " No statesman ever did with so little sleep. Morny began to work when he came home, however late that might be. Like all great workers, he was an early riser. In summer he would don a light blue velvet coat, and in winter a dressing-gown made of cashmere. The moment he rose he would test his breathing, look at himself in the glass, and, without further medical consultation, he would proceed to drug himself according to his own fancy " (" Memoirs of Villemessant").

accomplish my task," he said ; and he would repeat : " Yes, yes ; I know I must resign."

One day in February, as the pale rays of a winter sun endeavoured vainly to dispel the winter clouds, he felt the cold more intensely than ever. He sat shivering before a huge fire, wrapped in a rug of blue fox-skin. He was more annoyed than alarmed at his condition. " It is nothing," said his doctor.

" You cuddle yourself too much," added his wife in a bantering tone.

He made no reply, but drew nearer to the fire, just as Monsieur de Mora does in " The Nabob." He shivered, his teeth clattered, and he seemed too weak to act or to think. He sent for doctors. Trousseau, Ricord, Oliffe, and Voillemier were soon at his side. These eminent scientists held a long consultation, but were unable to agree upon an accurate diagnosis. They found certain symptoms of influenza, which did not quite tally with the usual ones in this complaint. Neither Trousseau nor Ricord had discovered the seat of the disease, though both were at the head of their profession. As the patient complained of pains about the liver, they auscultated him carefully, but found no lesion or congestion. Claude Bernard, the great physiologist, had not yet revealed to the world the true functions or possible alterations of the pancreas, which was the vital organ affected in the case of the Duc de Morny.

On February 17 he opened the Parliamentary

session. His voice was weak and languid. On the following day he asked Vice-President Schneider to preside in his stead. The members seemed preoccupied and ill at ease, more especially Émile Ollivier. His position was rendered more difficult in the absence of Morny, as he was still wavering between the Right and the Left benches.

Neither he nor the other Members had yet any serious causes for apprehension. Quite recently the wife of Field-Marshal Randon had given a ball, at which the Duchesse de Morny was present. Replying to Madame de Walewski, our informant, she said: "My husband is very unwell, but I have come here because we must show ourselves, and thus allay all fears; but I shall soon be at his bedside."

An apparent improvement took place during the ensuing week. Though fully conscious of his condition—more so, perhaps, than anyone else—Morny conceived the hope that this improvement might prove permanent. He was gay, almost merry. On the 25th he presided for the last time at a sitting of the Corps Législatif. He thanked his Deputies for the great interest they had displayed in his health, and expressed the hope that he would soon be quite himself again. He told them, among other things, that that very morning the Emperor had graciously sent him the first volume of "The Life of Julius Cæsar," which was dedicated to him in flattering and affectionate terms.

His neuralgic pains had ceased. He breathed more freely and felt much stronger. He thought he was really cured. On the following Thursday, which was the Duchess's At Home day, he remained in her drawing-room till past midnight. He seemed happy and gay, though his looks betrayed the sufferings he had endured. There was little change in his condition until February 28. All fears seemed allayed. The 28th was Shrove Tuesday, and he took the keenest delight in seeing his children decked out in Carnival fancy-dress. As the weather was extremely mild, he went for a drive in the Bois. On his return he felt extremely ill, and had high fever. He had caught bronchitis, but it seemed to be a mild attack. A reception at the Palais-Bourbon was about to be held, and the Duchess was busily preparing for it. In the meanwhile her husband was dying. The household of the palace was suddenly bewildered.*

* We quote the following remarkable page from Alphonse Daudet's great work, "Robert Helmont." It presents a vivid picture of the bewilderment of the Palais-Bourbon among those who were affected by the news. It either hit them in their deepest affections or upset their selfish calculations. "The servants and valets wandered through the corridors and the drawing-rooms or stood in groups around the fireplaces. Those who were not affected from motives of affection or devotion seemed more upset and anxious than the others. This horde of ambitious, greedy, and disappointed underlings felt itself face to face with its ruined hopes, and knew full well that fresh efforts must be made in order to insure success. There were many comedies enacted in this drama. The dying man's body-servant was begging for a few louis which lay in the drawers of his table. He was the confidential servant, who knew the intimate secrets of his master. Outside in the ante-

Madame de Morny became alarmed ; the officials and the retainers who lived upon the Duke or depended upon his protection were seized with mortal anguish. On awaking that morning he had noticed a little blood trickling from his mouth ; it had slightly stained his beard and pillow. This refined and elegant man, who had a horror of all human sufferings, and especially of illness, suddenly lost all his illusions.* Now he saw the dread malady in all its awful reality, with all its hideous weaknesses, including that forsaking of oneself, the first concession which man must grant to death. In a moment he saw the inevitable. He sent for Comte de Montguyon, his most intimate friend, who loved him, but never flattered him. †

" Tell me the truth, dear friend. I am at a very low ebb, am I not ?"

" My poor Auguste, you are done for."

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room two mighty financiers, whose fortunes had been made by Morny, were huddled together, discussing events in low tones, rendered inaudible by the distracting noise which proceeded from a huge cage filled with apes, who were so excited by the unusual goings and comings that they clung to their bars, weirdly blinking, sibilating, and grimacing. "

* I was present. I understood the meaning of his sad and furtive glance, and I realized that at that moment he had just had a vision of the terrible truth (the death of Monsieur de Morny, as described by Alphonse Daudet in " Robert Helmont ").

† Montguyon was the original of Montpavan in " Le Nabab." His sad end has been described in romantic terms. When he had spent his last resources, and cared no longer for life, he committed suicide in a Turkish bath. His tombstone, hidden by a luxuriant growth of oblivion, was recently discovered in the cemetery of Père Lachaise.

This was crudely said, with frank familiarity, but with much sadness.

The patient was bound to this life by happy ties and by success. On hearing his doom, he faltered for about a minute. During that minute, his whole life—his youth wrapped in mystery, his rapid ascent to power, and his wealth—stood out before him by a supreme effort of concentration. He would soon have to bid farewell to everything; but his mind was soon made up, and he courageously accepted his fate. One can say of him what was said of Talleyrand, his ancestor: "He died like a man, who knew how to live like a man."

The fits of coughing became more frequent and more violent. The patient's temperature rose rapidly, and he soon became delirious. Dr. Rayer was recalled in all haste, and declared that a fortnight must elapse before the exact nature of the disease could be ascertained. His diagnosis was wrong in every detail. The patient's throat had become so contracted that it was almost closed. He could hardly articulate a few words. Pancreatitis, an ailment which science could not cope with then, was running its course with terrific speed.

Morny recovered consciousness for a short time, but he was very weak. With indomitable courage he realized that he was past recovery, and that he must prepare in great haste for the "departure." He sent for his two secretaries, L'Espine and Demestre, to whom he dictated his will, and whom

he bade destroy certain documents and correspondence which must not survive him. His diplomatic correspondence, together with certain fragments of history and other writings, were put on one side. The rest was consigned to the flames, which devoured many intimate pages and saved many reputations.

He then sent for some of his friends.

Meanwhile, Henri, his valet, came to his bedside, and offered him a spoonful of the medicine prescribed.

"Henri," he said, "you must now leave me. The end is near, and I have only a few hours in which to prepare for my departure." It was thus that he always referred to his death.

"I tell you, this is the end of all things: I must get ready for the great departure." To this he devoted his last moments, as if it were the accomplishment of an important task. He had bidden to his side Roqueplan, Ludovic Halévy, Paul Daru, Charles Daugny, and Crémieux. They were joined by Flahaut, Rouher, and La Valette. In turn they pressed the moist hand of the moribund, who recognized them all by a word, a sign, a last attention. To one of them he said: "How soon it all comes!" To another he put the following question, so natural upon the lips of a public man: "What do they say in Paris of all this?"*

* His illness was the subject of every conversation. The public could not understand the nature of the disease which

The cruellest leave-takings had yet to take place. He had sent for his wife, with whom he remained alone for over an hour. He then kissed his four little children, and as they left the room, wondering what had happened, he cried out: "Good-bye, my little ones—good-bye!"

On March 7 the Sovereigns learnt that Morny was dying. The Emperor and Empress hastened to his room. The Emperor was deeply moved as he grasped his brother's hand. The Duke did not recognize him, for delirium had once more possessed itself of his whole being, from which his soul seemed absent.

As Napoleon sat by the bed, holding the patient's hand, he thought of their dual destiny, so fateful, so strange, from the cradle to the last separation; while the Empress knelt and prayed fervently. They spent half an hour in silent expectation, after which they retired to the next apartment. For a minute or two the fever was somewhat abated. Profiting by this short spell of lucidity, Flahaut

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had so suddenly stricken the man of energy. Mysterious causes were hinted at, the nature of which must be kept secret. Some spoke of a fatal duel, due to the vengeance of an outraged husband. It was also said that in order to avoid a scandal, the Duke was stated to be suffering from an internal complaint. Many people believed it.

Strangely enough, Mérimée wrote to Victor Cousin in March, 1865, and gave him the following explanation, which contained a gross impertinence:

"The Duke of Morny was suffering from anæmia, aggravated by the absurd remedies of Oliffe, the English doctor, and perhaps also by Madame de Morny (*sic*).

leaned over and whispered to his son: "The Emperor has come; he is still here. Would you like to see him?"

"Yes, yes, I would," whispered the dying man.

Those present withdrew, and the two brothers exchanged a few words in a low whisper. The respite was a short one. For the third time the patient became delirious, and the Emperor left the room, deeply affected and sobbing with all his might. Towards one in the morning the agony began.

The Archbishop of Paris came and administered the last Sacraments.* At seven o'clock the valet said to the doctor in attendance: "Monsieur le Duc is passing away."

"No," replied the man of science; "we shall keep him alive for a few more hours; but let us remove this blister, which is paining him, and cannot relieve him." They proceeded to do so with infinite care, and turned the Duke over on to his right side. As they did so he heaved a sigh and yielded up his soul to its Maker.

Flahaut was still there. He had witnessed the dying moments of Morny, his son, as he had those of Talleyrand, his father; but he was unable to

* It was Monsiegneur Darboy's second visit. Two days previously Morny had consented to receive him—not so much for the sake of pious consolation, which could give him no hope, as for the sake of society and the rank he occupied.

call them "son" or "father"—words which express the fulness of human love in the supreme moments of the final wrench. An eyewitness has thus described the sad spectacle which met his gaze:

"This room, in which so many agitations had first begun to flap their wings, was now given over to the silence and the solitude of passing death. The Duke lay on his bed, with features rigid, aged, and altered by a beard which had become blanched in a single night. The presence of a priest, a nun, and the atmosphere of a death-wake, recalled the vigils of sleepless nights and the mutterings of prayers in the dark. The day had just dawned, and yet across the green lawns of the garden one could hear upon the bridge of La Concorde the shrill notes of a clarinet, stifling the din of the morning traffic.*

"Later on this room struck me as being still more mournful. Its windows were wide open, and the wind blew freely through it. There was a white form laid upon a trestle. It was the body, which had just been embalmed."

Morny was buried with royal honours. From early morning the echo repeated the roar of twenty

* This was the clarinet of a mendicant; its shrill notes were a constant source of worry to Morny, who had endeavoured in vain to silence them. The powerful charmer had only been mastered by two men throughout his life. The one was Henri Rochefort, the brilliant and caustic writer; the other was the beggar on the "Pont de la Concorde."

cannons, which heralded this day of public mourning. The march-past of the troops, of the guns, of the Court carriages, of numberless vehicles and officials of all ranks, seemed interminable. It was witnessed by the whole population of Paris. The thoroughfares, the side-streets, every nook and every window, were occupied. Fifteen guns announced the arrival of the cortège at the cemetery of Père-Lachaise. The silver coffin containing the remains of the Duc de Morny was laid in its sumptuous sepulchre.

The grief of the young Duchess was heart-rending. She sobbed, and seemed to wish that this grave, so prematurely opened, might also swallow her. In accordance with the Russian custom, she had shorn her fair tresses the day her husband died, and piously placed them between the cold hands of the man she mourned. During several days she insisted that his place should be laid at table, as usual.

She remained absorbed by her grief; but unexpected circumstances—things whispered and things written, the surprises of chance and the treachery of friends—soon helped to heal her wound, and to make her forget her loss.

On the eve of his great "departure" Morny had secured the destruction of a mass of correspondence, which might compromise the reputations of well-known people, or cast a lurid light upon passing secrets which were never meant to enjoy

eternity. These papers contained tale-telling petitions and many *billets* of tender colours, fragrant with the perfumes of the boudoir. Letters dictated by business motives, by ambition, or by love, were consigned to the flames. In the hurry, however, a small bundle was unfortunately omitted. Its contents amounted to an indictment of the dead man's past in the eyes of his surviving spouse. That was not all. Kind friends, such as are plentiful in this world, imparted extra bitterness to her first impressions by perfidious insinuations. A sudden revolution was effected in her soul, and she considered herself absolved of her vow of constancy. The day after her discovery she called upon Countess Ostianov, her cousin, wearing a coloured dress. This was how she explained her action : " I now understand that I only existed in his mind as a means to obtain access to a different social circle. As I was only a cipher, a unit among many, my obligations towards him have changed, as well as my feelings." She spoke these words under provocation, and she soon admitted that she was unfair to Morny's memory. She confessed that he had always loved her, although at times he had been a volatile and a somewhat trying husband.

She remained two years a widow, but not in complete seclusion. She entertained and travelled a great deal. Her mode of life remained very extravagant. Her children occupied the mansion of the Avenue d'Antan in Paris, or the handsome

villa at Deauville,* which had been bequeathed to them by their father, but which did not remain in their possession.

It represented a portion of the fortune he had made in business and in politics. That fortune was not so very great, after all. Morny squandered a great deal of money, and kept up a very expensive establishment. His yearly expenditure amounted to about £20,000, although he and his family occupied the Palais-Bourbon free of rent, and lived at the cost of the nation. When his affairs were wound up, after a great deal of trouble, his available capital was found to have been greatly decreased by speculation. He had embarked upon a series of very questionable flotations, which he had not time to see through. In a word, his debit account told heavily against his credit account. At the time of his death he had 140 horses, including those upon his stud-farm at

* We read in the manuscript memoirs of the Marquise de Morny, the second daughter of the Duchess, that her children were somewhat forgotten, if not neglected. Towards 1869, the whole family was in Paris. It was suddenly decided that the children should be sent to the seaside, where they remained until 1870, the year of the war. At that critical moment the Duc and Duchesse de Sesto (this was now Madame de Morny's new name) decided to go and live upon their estate near Madrid. On the day of their departure the Duke said to his wife: "Have you advised the children?" "Great goodness!" she replied, "I had forgotten all about them." The Marquise adds: "We received telegram upon telegram, and in two hours we had to pack our trunks and get ready for the journey. Our party consisted of six children (two of which were our cousins), the tutor, the governess, and the servants."

Viroflay, which cost him £8,000 or £9,000 a year. The sale of his pictures and works of art realized about £40,000, and his invested capital could not have been more than £60,000. The Duchess had no other means than her widow's share in her husband's estate. Her parents had no property ; they lived apart, and in a very modest way. But the daughter of the Troubetzkoïs was soon to come by untold wealth. In order to do so, she adopted a new name and a third nationality.

The Duchess was by no means enamoured of Spanish society. In a conversation with her cousin, Baron de Behr, she compared it to a menagerie, in which the lions were scarce and the monkeys very numerous. Nevertheless, she was a constant visitor of Queen Isabelle II., whose intelligence, frankness, and generosity strongly appealed to her.* It was in the Queen's entourage that she met her second husband, a cousin of the Empress of the French, who had touched her heart when he was still the Marquis d'Alcanizes, and when she, Eugénie de Montijo, was looking out for " the providential husband." He was a most distinguished man, though not so handsome or seductive as one might have expected if one were guided by his success

* Madame de Sesto was such an ardent Legitimist that she never went to the Spanish Court during the short reign of the Duke of Aosta. In France her sentiments had remained faithful to her ideal of the old Bourbon monarchy, symbolized in her mind by the brilliant and suffering Marie Antoinette.

in youth. He was both loyal and reliable, somewhat weak in his private relations, but withal a good and generous man. His residence in Madrid was a real palace. Its apartments, furniture, tapestries, and picture-gallery were the admiration of all. The Duchess's room was an exact reproduction of one of the rooms in the Alhambra at Seville.* She had furnished it with exquisite and lavish taste. She gave a magnificent reception in honour of Alphonso XII. The Duc de Sesto had done everything in his power to place the young King upon the throne. He had accompanied him in all his travels when he was Prince of the Asturias, had directed his studies, and bestowed upon him the love of a father. On the occasion of this sumptuous feast given by the Duke in honour of his King, the Duchess removed all the tapestries from the picture-gallery, and had it upholstered in yellow damask from floor to ceiling. As a rule, she did not entertain much in Madrid, the society of which was not germane to her. She regretted her life in France, and her first marriage, recognizing the evident superiority of Morny. At times she did not even take the trouble to disguise her

* The garden was beautiful. It had a long terrace, five yards high, upon which there was a pond of filtered water, in which all the children learnt to swim. The De Sestos were often invited to La Granja, the wonderful property of the King of Spain, built by the grandson of Louis XIV. upon the plans of the palace of Versailles. The Duke's apartments were in the left wing of La Granja.

feelings. The Duc de Sesto had grown very fond of the Duc de Morny's children. They treated him like a father. He had really fathered him in their tenderest youth. When the Duchess was absent, he treated them with infinite kindness and indulgence, and spared no effort to make them happy and to afford them their freedom. He taught them to ride and to drive a team. He spoilt them, and they adored him, for they had the use of his forty or fifty horses, and of everything that he possessed. The Duc de Morny's favourite child was his youngest girl, though the mother seemed to have conceived an extraordinary antipathy towards her. She considered that the child was bereft of all grace and full of defects,* and this feeling endured to the very end. The Duchess was ever capricious. Her nature was both variable and impulsive. She still nurtured certain ideas engendered by the old despotic and stand-off system of Slavonic education. She conferred the right of ruling over her children with

* The child had been christened the "Tapir" because of her long nose. In after-life she preserved a very bitter recollection of her early days. Her intelligence was developed somewhat slowly, and she seemed to live in a sort of dream, utterly incapable of any resistance. She wrote as follows: "I have a bitter recollection of having once put the following question to our devoted English maid one day that I was in a very bad temper: 'Why am I papa's daughter [this was the Duc de Sesto], and not my mother's daughter?' Our good maid burst out crying, but gave me no answer." The blanks in a childhood deprived of joy and love influenced her ideas and her feelings. They go far to explain many matters which have been deemed more than strange.

the utmost severity upon tutors, governesses, and subordinates devoid of all affection.* Her boys were rapidly growing up under the skies of France and Spain. They were eager for action and enterprise, but they hardly knew what line to follow, because political revolutions had thrown them out of all their reckonings. Notwithstanding the intrinsic kindness of the Duc de Sesto, they were heavily handicapped by the misfortune which had robbed them at an early age of the advice and enlightened guidance of their father. Their mother died suddenly in Paris. One morning she wrote to the exiled Queen Isabelle, saying that she would afford herself the pleasure of calling upon her that afternoon. Two hours later she was no more.

The loss of a man like Morny had produced widespread results. It precipitated the decline of the Empire, which was foreseen by all those who could follow the progress of events. When Morny left this world, Europe was shaken. The Imperial régime was unwittingly hurrying to its ruin. Fate had conferred at least one favour upon Morny by choosing the hour of his demise. He did not witness the prologue of that military drama in which France was doomed to be defeated before its inception. He was not compelled to

* A German governess was instantly dismissed by the Duc de Sesto for having said to her pupil: "Mademoiselle de Morny, kneel down and beg my pardon."

PRINCESS WORONSOFF

foretell the results of Sadowa, he who had said to the Emperor: "Do not attack the King of Prussia now—you are not ready. If you do so, he will throw you into the Rhine." Now that Louis Napoleon was deprived of his advice, the foreign policy of France became more and more uncertain. A condition of perpetual contradiction seemed to obtain between the occult acts of his Cabinet and the line of conduct mapped out by his Ministers.* While Napoleon's ablest antagonist and most implacable enemy was forming alliances everywhere, and methodically narrowing the circle of his diplomatic investment, Napoleon III. insisted on training his guns upon Austria. He ignored the advances of Russia, and still placed his trust in Germany, thus following a course of action in no way warranted by any external sign. Morny was no more available. He could not guide the crowned dreamer, his brother, or save him from those flights of imagination which so often mastered him, and caused him to be a source of continual trouble to his throne and to his country. The calm and dignified man who could check unreasoned opinions by invoking the positive laws of facts lay in Père-Lachaise. Napoleon's illogical opinions were all the more dangerous as they were entertained by a man who

* The Emperor never offered the slightest indication concerning the goal he had in view or the nature of his plans. The Empress, on the other hand, interfered in everything, and mixed up the cards of foreign politics. She was always trying to form what she was pleased to term "coalitions."

lacked decision, was incapable of active resistance, and could never make up his mind at the critical moment.

The fortuitous course of events had decreed that the prosperity of the Empire should not endure beyond the life of one of its founders.

Morny gave the last and most convincing proof of his ability by dying at the right moment. Were he alive, he would congratulate us upon this epitaph.

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